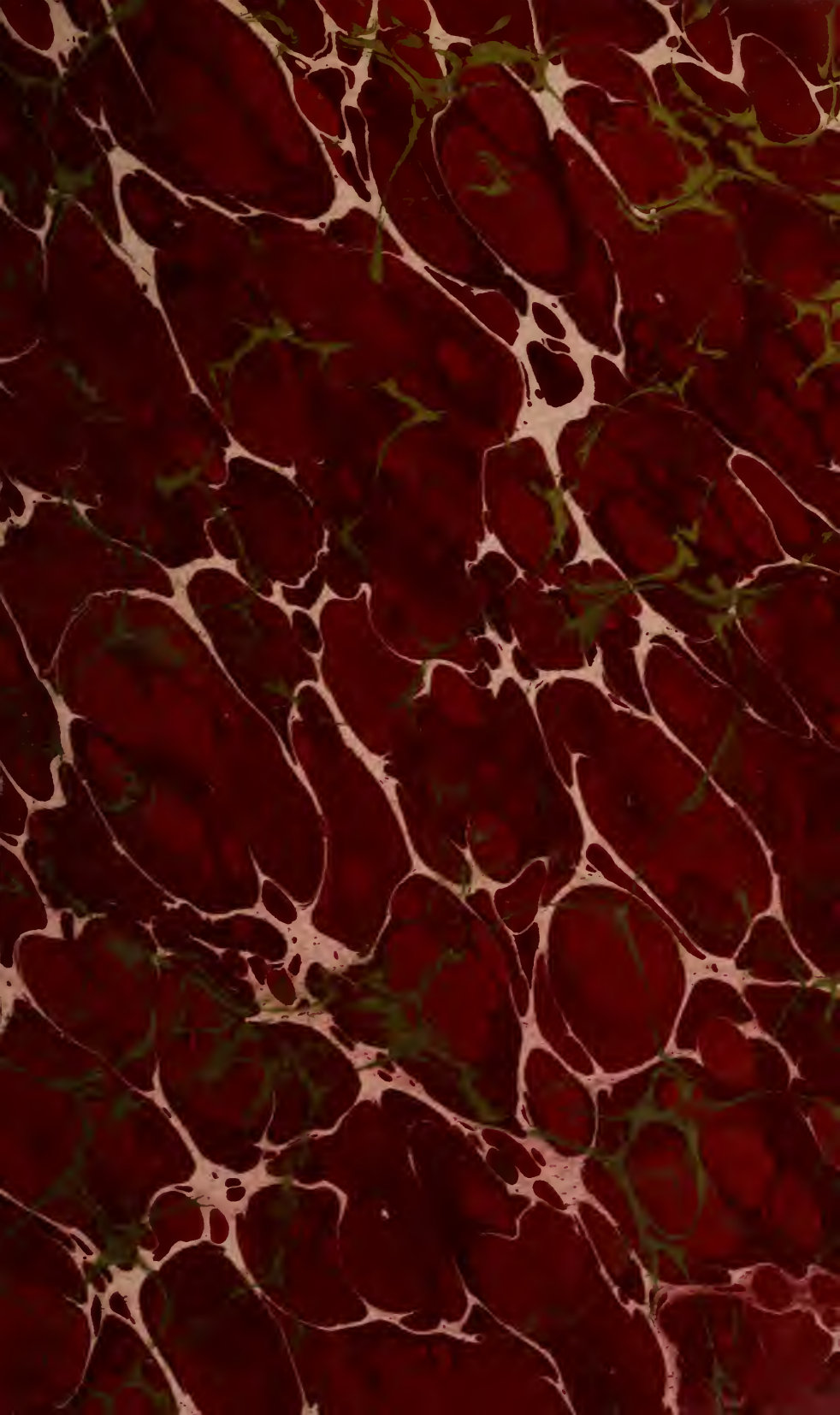
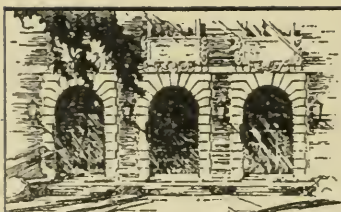




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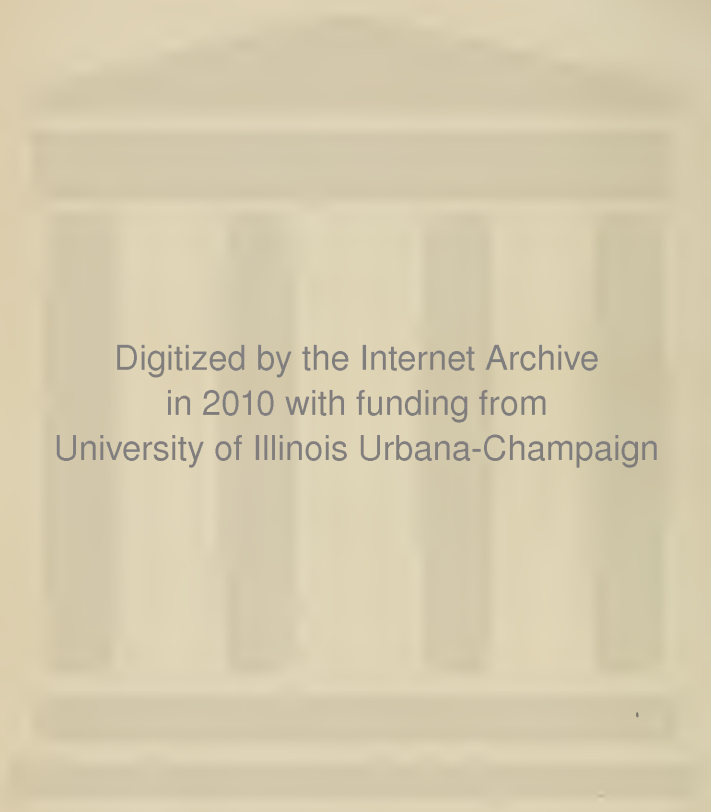
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EVAN HARRINGTON.

BY

GEORGE MEREDITH,

AUTHOR OF "THE ORDEAL OF RICHARD FEVEREL,"
"THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
ABOVE BUTTONS	1

CHAPTER II.

THE HERITAGE OF THE SON	14
-----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE SHEARS	27
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

ON BOARD THE JOCASTA	43
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

THE FAMILY AND THE FUNERAL	69
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD	85
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

MOTHER AND SON	100
--------------------------	-----

Dec. 22, 1849
Saw rec. Copy & Dec. 49 Carriage - 31

	PAGE
CHAPTER VIII.	
INTRODUCE AN ECCENTRIC	124
CHAPTER IX.	
THE COUNTESS IN LOW SOCIETY	148
CHAPTER X.	
MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD AGAIN	169
CHAPTER XI.	
DOINGS AT AN INN	190
CHAPTER XII.	
IN WHICH ALE IS SHOWN TO HAVE ONE QUALITY OF WINE	211
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE MATCH OF FALLOWFIELD AGAINST BECKLEY	236
CHAPTER XIV.	
THE COUNTESS DESCRIBES THE FIELD OF ACTION	271
CHAPTER XV.	
A CAPTURE	290

EVAN HARRINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

ABOVE BUTTONS.

LONG after the hours when tradesmen are in the habit of commencing business, the shutters of a certain shop in the town of Lymport-on-the-Sea remained significantly closed, and it became known that death had taken Mr. Melchisedec Harrington, and struck one off the list of living tailors. The demise of a respectable member of this class does not ordinarily create a profound sensation. He dies, and his equals debate who is to be his successor: while the rest of them who have come in contact with him, very probably hear nothing of his great launch and final adieu till the winding up of cash-accounts; on which occasions we may augur that he is not often blessed by one or other of the two great parties who subdivide this universe. In the case of Mr. Melchisedec it was otherwise. This had been a grand man, despite his calling, and in the teeth of opprobrious

epithets against his craft. To be both generally blamed, and generally liked, evinces a peculiar construction of mortal. Mr. Melchisedec, whom people in private called the great Mel, had been at once the sad dog of Lymport, and the pride of the town. He was a tailor, and he kept horses; he was a tailor, and he had gallant adventures; he was a tailor, and he shook hands with his customers. Finally, he was a tradesman, and he never was known to have sent in a bill. Such a personage comes but once in a generation, and, when he goes, men miss the man as well as their money.

That he was dead, there could be no doubt. Kilne, the publican opposite, had seen Sally, one of the domestic servants, come out of the house in the early morning and rush up the street to the doctor's, tossing her hands; and she, not disinclined to dilute her grief, had, on her return, related that her master was then at his last gasp, and had refused, in so many words, to swallow the doctor.

“‘I won't swallow the doctor!’ he says, ‘I won't swallow the doctor!’” Sally moaned. “‘I never touched him,’ he says, ‘and I never will.’”

Kilne angrily declared that, in his opinion, a man who rejected medicine in extremity, ought to have it forced down his throat: and consider-

ing that the invalid was pretty deeply in Kilne's debt, it naturally assumed the form of a dishonest act on his part; but Sally scornfully dared anyone to lay hand on her master, even for his own good. "For," said she, "he's got his eyes awake, though he do lie so helpless. He marks ye!"

"How does he look?" said Kilne.

"Bless ye! I only seen him once since he was took," returned Sally. "We're none of us allowed to come anigh him—only missus."

"Ah! ah!" went Kilne, and sniffed the air. Sally then rushed back to her duties.

"Now, there's a man!" Kilne stuck his hands in his pockets and began his meditation: which, however, was cut short by the approach of his neighbour Barnes, the butcher, to whom he confided what he had heard, and who ejaculated professionally, "Obstinate as a pig!" As they stood together they beheld Sally, a figure of telegraph, at one of the windows, implying that all was just over.

"Amen!" said Barnes, as to a matter-of-fact affair.

Some minutes after the two were joined by Grossby the confectioner, who listened to the news, and observed:

"Just like him! I'd have sworn he'd never take doctor's stuff;" and, nodding at Kilne, "liked *his* medicine best, eh?"

“Had a—hem!—good lot of it,” muttered Kilne, with a suddenly serious brow.

“How does he stand on your books?” asked Barnes.

Kilne shouldered round, crying: “Who the deuce is to know?”

“I don’t,” Grossby sighed. “In he comes with his ‘Good morning, Grossby,—fine day for the hunt, Grossby,’ and a ten pound note. ‘Have the kindness to put that down in my favour, Grossby.’ And just as I am going to say, ‘Look here,—this won’t do,’ he has me by the collar, and there’s one of the regiments going to give a supper party, which he’s to order; or the admiral’s wife wants the receipt for that pie; or in comes my wife, and there’s no talking of business then, though she may have been bothering about his account all the night beforehand. Something or other! and so we run on.”

“What I want to know,” said Barnes the butcher, “is where he got his tenners from?”

Kilne shook a sagacious head: “No knowing!”

“I suppose we shall get something out of the fire?” Barnes suggested.

“That depends!” answered the emphatic Kilne.

“But, you know, if the widow carries on the business,” said Grossby, “there’s no reason why we shouldn’t get it all, eh?”

“There ain’t two that can make clothes for nothing, and make a profit out of it,” said Kilne.

“That young chap in Portugal,” added Barnes, “*he* won’t take to tailoring when he comes home. D’ye think he will?”

Kilne muttered: “Can’t say!” and Grossby, a kindly creature in his way, albeit a creditor, reverting to the first subject of their discourse, ejaculated, “But what a one he *was*!—eh?”

“Fine!—to look on,” Kilne assented.

“Well, he *was* like a Marquis,” said Barnes.

Here the three regarded each other, and laughed, though not loudly. They instantly checked that unseemliness, and Kilne, as one who rises from the depths of a calculation with the sum in his head, spoke quite in a different voice:

“Well, what do you say, gentlemen? shall we adjourn? No use standing here.”

By the invitation to adjourn, it was well understood by the committee Kilne addressed, that they were invited to pass his threshold, and partake of a morning draught. Barnes, the butcher, had no objection whatever, and if Grossby, a man of milder make, entertained any, the occasion and common interests to be discussed, advised him to waive them. In single file these mourners entered the publican’s house, where Kilne, after summoning them from behind the bar, on the important question, what it should be? and re-

ceiving, first, perfect acquiescence in his views as to what it should be, and then feeble suggestions of the drink best befitting that early hour and the speaker's particular constitution, poured out a toothful to each, and one to himself.

"Here's to him, poor fellow!" said Kilne; and was deliberately echoed twice.

"Now, it wasn't that," Kilne pursued, pointing to the bottle in the midst of a smacking of lips, "that wasn't what got him into difficulties. It was expensive luckshries. It was being above his condition. Horses! What's a tradesman got to do with horses? Unless he's retired! *Then* he's a gentleman, and can do as he likes. It's no use trying to be a gentleman if you can't pay for it. It always ends bad. Why, there was he, consorting with gentlefolks—gay as a lark! Who has to pay for it?"

Kilne's fellow victims maintained a rather doleful tributary silence.

"I'm not saying anything against him now," the publican further observed. "It's too late. And there! I'm sorry he's gone, for one. He was as kind a hearted a man as ever breathed. And there! perhaps it was just as much my fault; I couldn't say 'No' to him,—dash me, if I could!"

Lymport was a prosperous town, and in prosperity the much despised British tradesman is

not a harsh, he is really a well-disposed, easy soul, and requires but management, manner, occasional instalments—just to freshen the account—and a surety that he who debits is on the spot, to be a right royal king of credit. Only the account must never drivel. *Stare aut crescere* appears to be his feeling on that point, and the departed Mr. Melchisedec undoubtedly understood him there; for, though the running on of the account looked so deplorable and extraordinary now that Mr. Melchisedec was no longer in a position to run on with it, it was precisely that fact which had prevented it from being brought to a summary close long before.

Both Barnes, the butcher, and Grossby, the confectioner, confessed that they, too, found it hard ever to say “No” to him, and, speaking broadly, never could.

“Except once,” said Barnes, “when he wanted me to let him have a ox to roast whole out on the common, for the Battle of Waterloo. I stood out against him on that. ‘No, no,’ says I, ‘I’ll joint him for ye, Mr. Harrington. You shall have him in joints, and eat him at home;’—ha! ha!”

“Just like him!” said Grossby, with true enjoyment of the princely disposition that had dictated that patriotic order.

“Oh!—there!” Kilne emphasised, pushing

out his arm across the bar, as much as to say, that in anything of that kind, the great Mel never had a rival.

“That ‘Marquis’ affair changed him a bit,” said Barnes.

“Perhaps it did, for a time,” said Kilne. “What’s in the grain, you know. He couldn’t change. He would be a gentleman, and nothing’d stop him.”

“And I shouldn’t wonder but what that young chap out in Portugal ’ll want to be one, too; though he didn’t bid fair to be so fine a man as his father.”

“More of a scholar,” remarked Kilne. “That I call his worst fault—shilly-shallying about that young chap. I mean *his*.” Kilne stretched a finger towards the dead man’s house. “First, the young chap’s to be sent into the navy; then it’s the army; then he’s to be a judge, and sit on criminals; then he goes out to his sister in Portugal; and now there’s nothing but a tailor open to him, as I see, if we’re to get our money.”

“Ah! and he hasn’t got too much spirit to work to pay his father’s debts,” added Barnes. “There’s a business there to make any man’s fortune—properly *directed*, I say. But, I suppose, like father like son, he’ll be coming the Marquis, too. He went to a gentleman’s school, and he’s had foreign training. I don’t know

what to think about it. His sister over there—she's a fine woman."

"Oh! a fine family, every one of 'em! and married well!" exclaimed the publican.

"I never had the exact rights of that 'Marquis' affair," said Grossby; and, remembering that he had previously laughed knowingly when it was alluded to, pursued; "Of course I heard of it at the time, but how did he behave when he was blown upon?"

Barnes undertook to explain; but Kilne, who relished the narrative quite as well, and was readier, said:

"Look here! I'll tell you. I had it from his own mouth one night when he wasn't—not quite himself. He was coming down King William Street, where he stabled his horse, you know, and I met him. He'd been dining out—some-where out over Fallowfield, I think it was; and he sings out to me, 'Ah! Kilne, my good fellow!' and I, wishing to be equal with him, says, 'A fine night, my lord!' and he draws himself up—he smelt of good company—says he, 'Kilne! I'm not a lord, as you know, and you have no excuse for mistaking me for one, sir!' So I pretended I *had* mistaken him, and then he tucked his arm under mine, and said, 'You're no worse than your betters, Kilne. They took me for one at Squire Uploft's to-night, but a man who wishes

to pass off for more than he is, Kilne, and impose upon people,' he says, 'he's contemptible, Kilne! contemptible!' So that, you know, set me thinking about 'Bath' and the 'Marquis,' and I couldn't help smiling to myself, and just let slip a question whether he had enlightened them a bit. 'Kilne,' said he, 'you're an honest man, and a neighbour, and I'll tell you what happened, The Squire,' he says, 'likes my company, and I like his table. Now the Squire'd never do a dirty action, but the Squire's nephew, Mr. George Uploft, he can't forget that I earn my money, and once or twice I have had to correct him.' And I'll wager Mel did it, too! Well, he goes on: 'There was Admiral Sir Jackson Roseley and his lady, at dinner, Squire Foulke of Hursted, Lady Barrington, Admiral Combleman'—our admiral, that was; Mr. This and That, I forget their names— and other ladies and gentlemen whose acquaintance I was not honoured with.' You know his way of talking. 'And there was a goose on the table,' he says; and, looking stern at me, 'Don't laugh yet!' says he, like thunder. Well, he goes on: 'Mr. George caught my eye across the table, and said, so as not to be heard by his uncle, "If that bird was rampant, you would see your own arms, Marquis."' And Mel replied, quietly for him to hear, 'And as that bird is couchant, Mr. George, you had better look to

your sauce.' *Couchant* means squatting, you know. That's 'erally! Well, that wasn't bad sparring of Mel's. But, bless you! he was never taken aback, and the gentlefolks was glad enough to get him to sit down amongst 'em. So, says Mr. George, 'I know you're a fire-eater, Marquis,' and his dander was up, for he began marquising Mel, and doing the mock-polite at such a rate, that, by-and-by, one of the ladies who didn't know Mel called him 'my lord' and 'his lordship.' 'And,' says Mel, 'I merely bowed to her, and took no notice.' So that passed off: and there sits Mel telling his anecdotes, as grand as a king. And, by-and-by, young Mr. George, who hadn't forgiven Mel, and had been pulling at the bottle pretty well, he sings out, 'It's Michaelmas! the death of the goose! and I should like to drink the Marquis's health!' and he drank it solemn. But, as far as I can make out, the women part of the company was a little in the dark. So Mel waited till there was a sort of a pause, and then speaks rather loud to the Admiral, 'By the way, Sir Jackson, may I ask you, has the title of Marquis anything to do with tailoring?' Now Mel was a great favourite with the Admiral, and with his lady, too,—they *say*—and the Admiral played into his hands, you see, and, says he, 'I'm not aware that it has, Mr. Harrington.' And he begged for to know why he asked the question—

called him, 'Mister,' you understand. So Mel said, and I can see him now—right out from his chest he spoke, with his head up—'When I was a younger man, I had the good taste to be fond of good society, and the bad taste to wish to appear different from what I was in it.' That's Mel speaking; everybody was listening; so he goes on. 'I was in the habit of going to Bath in the season, and *consorting* with the gentlemen I met there on terms of equality; and for some reason that I am quite guiltless of,' says Mel, 'the hotel people gave out that I was a Marquis in disguise; and, upon my honour, ladies and gentlemen—I was young then, and a fool—I could not help imagining I looked the thing. At all events, I took upon myself to act the part, and with some success, and considerable gratification; for, in my opinion,' says Mel, 'no real Marquis ever enjoyed his title so much as I did. One day I was in my shop—No. 193, Main Street, Lymport—and a gentleman came in to order his outfit. I received his directions, when suddenly he started back, stared at me, and exclaimed: "My dear Marquis! I trust you will pardon me for having addressed you with so much familiarity." I recognised in him one of my Bath acquaintances. That circumstance, ladies and gentlemen, has been a lesson to me. Since that time I have never allowed a false impression with regard to my position to exist.

I desire,' says Mel, smiling, 'to have my exact measure taken everywhere; and if the Michaelmas bird is to be associated with me, I am sure I have no objection; all I can say is, that I cannot justify it by letters patent of nobility.' That's how Mel put it. Do you think they thought worse of him? I warrant you he came out of it in flying colours. Gentlefolks like straight-forwardness in their inferiors—that's what they do. Ah!" said Kilne, meditatively, "I see him now, walking across the street in the moonlight, after he'd told me that. A fine figure of a man! and there ain't many Marquises to match him."

To this Barnes and Grossby, not insensible to the merits of the recital they had just given ear to, agreed. And with a common voice of praise in the mouths of his creditors, the dead man's requiem was sounded.

1

CHAPTER II.

THE HERITAGE OF THE SON.

TOWARDS evening, a carriage drove up to the door of the muted house, and the card of Lady Roseley, bearing a hurried line in pencil, was handed to the widow.

It was when you looked upon her that you began to comprehend how great was the personal splendour of the husband who could eclipse such a woman. Mrs. Harrington was a tall and a stately dame. Dressed in the high waists of the matrons of that period, with a light shawl drawn close over her shoulders and bosom, she carried her head well; and her pale firm features, with the cast of immediate affliction on them, had much dignity: dignity of an unrelenting physical order, which need not express any remarkable pride of spirit. The family gossips who, on both sides, were vain of this rare couple, and would always descant on their beauty, even when they had occasion to slander their characters, said, to distinguish them, that Henrietta Maria had a Port, and Melchisedec a Presence: and that the union of a Port and a Presence, and such a Port and such a Presence,

was so uncommon, that you might search England through and you would not find another, not even in the highest ranks of society. There lies some subtle distinction here; due to the minute perceptions which compel the gossips of a family to coin phrases that shall express the nicest shades of a domestic difference. By a Port, one may understand them to indicate something unsympathetically impressive; whereas a Presence would seem to be a thing that directs the most affable appeal to our poor human weaknesses. His Majesty King George IV., for instance, possessed a Port: Beau Brummel wielded a Presence. Many, it is true, take a Presence to mean no more than a shirt-frill, and interpret a Port as the art of walking erect. But this is to look upon language too narrowly.

On a more intimate acquaintance with the couple, you acknowledge the aptness of the fine distinction. By birth Mrs. Harrington had claims to rank as a gentlewoman. That is, her father was a lawyer of Lymport. The lawyer, however, since we must descend the genealogical tree, was known to have married his cook, who was the lady's mother. Now Mr. Melchisedec was mysterious concerning his origin; and, in his cups, talked largely and wisely of a great Welsh family, issuing from a line of princes; and it is certain that he knew enough of their history to have

instructed them on particular points of it. He never could think that his wife had done him any honour in espousing him ; nor was she the woman to tell him so. She had married him for love, rejecting various suitors, Squire Uploft among them, in his favour. Subsequently she had committed the profound connubial error of transferring her affections, or her thoughts, from him to his business, which, indeed, was much in want of a mate ; and while he squandered the guineas, she patiently picked up the pence. They had not lived unhappily. He was constantly courteous to her. But to see the Port at that sordid work considerably ruffled the Presence—put, as it were, the peculiar division between them ; and to behave towards her as the same woman who had attracted his youthful ardours was a task for his magnificent mind, and may have ranked with him as an indemnity for his general conduct, if his reflections ever stretched so far. The townspeople of Lymport were correct in saying that his wife, and his wife alone, had, as they termed it, kept him together. Nevertheless, now that he was dead, and could no longer be kept together, they entirely forgot their respect for her, in the outburst of their secret admiration for the popular man. Such is the constitution of the inhabitants of this dear Island of Britain, so falsely accused by the Great Napoleon of being a nation of shop-

keepers. Here let anyone proclaim himself Above Buttons, and act on the assumption, his fellows with one accord hoist him on their heads, and bear him aloft, sweating, and groaning, and cursing, but proud of him! And if he can contrive, or has any good wife at home to help him, to die without going to the dogs, they are, one may say, unanimous in crying out the same eulogistic funeral oration as that commenced by Kilne, the publican, when he was interrupted by Barnes, the butcher, "Now, there's a man!—"

Mrs. Harrington was sitting in her parlour with one of her married nieces, Mrs. Fiske, and on reading Lady Roseley's card, she gave word for her to be shown up into the drawing-room. It was customary among Mrs. Harrington's female relatives, who one and all abused and adored the great Mel, to attribute his shortcomings pointedly to the ladies; which was as much as if their jealous generous hearts had said that he was sinful, but that it was not his fault. Mrs. Fiske caught the card from her aunt, read the superscription, and exclaimed: "The idea! At least she might have had the decency! She never set her foot in the house before—and right enough too! What can she want now? I decidedly would refuse to see her, aunt!"

The widow's reply was simply, "Don't be a fool, Ann!"

Rising, she said: "Here, take poor Jacko, and comfort him till I come back."

Jacko was a middle-sized South American monkey, and had been a pet of her husband's. He was supposed to be mourning now with the rest of the family. Mrs. Fiske received him on a shrinking lap, and had found time to correct one of his indiscretions before she could sigh and say, in the rear of her aunt's retreating figure, "I certainly never would let *myself* down so;" but Mrs. Harrington took her own counsel, and Jacko was of her persuasion, for he quickly released himself from Mrs. Fiske's dispassionate embrace, and was slinging his body up the balusters after his mistress.

"Mrs. Harrington," said Lady Roseley, very sweetly swimming to meet her as she entered the room, "I have intruded upon you, I fear, in venturing to call upon you at such a time?"

The widow bowed to her, and begged her to be seated.

Lady Roseley was an exquisitely silken dame, in whose face a winning smile was cut, and she was still sufficiently youthful not to be accused of wearing a flower too artificial.

"It was so sudden! so sad!" she continued.

“We esteemed him so much. I thought you might be in need of sympathy, and hoped I might— Dear Mrs. Harrington! can you bear to speak of it?”

“I can tell you anything you wish to hear, my lady,” the widow replied.

Lady Roseley had expected to meet a woman much more like what she conceived a tradesman’s wife would be: and the grave reception of her proffer of sympathy slightly confused her. She said:

“I should not have come, at least not so early, but Sir Jackson, my husband, thought, and indeed I imagined— You have a son, Mrs. Harrington? I think his name is—”

“Evan, my lady.”

“Evan. It was of him we have been speaking. I imagined—that is, we thought, Sir Jackson might—you will be writing to him, and will let him know we will use our best efforts to assist him in obtaining some position worthy of his—superior to—something that will secure him from the harassing embarrassments of an uncongenial employment.”

The widow listened to this tender allusion to the shears without a smile of gratitude. She replied: “I hope my son will return in time to bury his father, and he will thank you himself, my lady.”

“ He has no taste for—a—for anything in the shape of trade, has he, Mrs. Harrington ? ”

“ I am afraid not, my lady.”

“ Any position—a situation—that of a clerk even—would be so much better for him ! ”

The widow remained impassive.

“ And many young gentlemen I know, who are clerks, and are enabled to live comfortably, and make a modest appearance in society ; and your son, Mrs. Harrington, he would find it surely an improvement upon—many would think it a step for him.”

“ I am bound to thank you for the interest you take in my son, my lady.”

“ Does it not quite suit your views, Mrs. Harrington ? ” Lady Roseley was surprised at the widow’s manner.

“ If my son had only to think of himself, my lady.”

“ Oh ! but of course,”—the lady understood her now—“ of course ! You cannot suppose, Mrs. Harrington, but that I should anticipate he would have you to live with him, and behave to you in every way as a dutiful son, surely ? ”

“ A clerk’s income is not very large, my lady.”

“ No ; but enough, as I have said, and with the management you would bring, Mrs. Harrington, to produce a modest, respectable maintenance. My respect for your husband, Mrs. Harrington,

makes me anxious to press my services upon you." Lady Roseley could not avoid feeling hurt at the widow's want of common gratitude.

"A clerk's income would not be more than 100*l.* a-year, my lady."

"To begin with—no; certainly not more." The lady was growing brief.

"If my son puts by the half of that yearly, he can hardly support himself and his mother, my lady."

"Half of that yearly, Mrs. Harrington?"

"He would have to do so, and be saddled till he dies, my lady."

"I really cannot see why."

Lady Roseley had a notion of some excessive niggardly thrift in the widow, which was arousing symptoms of disgust.

Mrs. Harrington quietly said: "There are his father's debts to pay, my lady."

"His father's debts!"

"Under 5000*l.*, but above 4000*l.*, my lady."

"Five thousand pounds! Mrs. Harrington!" The lady's delicately gloved hand gently rose and fell. "And this poor young man—" she pursued.

"My son will have to pay it, my lady."

For a moment the lady had not a word to instance. Presently she remarked: "But, Mrs. Harrington, he is surely under no legal obligation?"

“He is only under the obligation not to cast disrespect on his father’s memory, my lady ; and to be honest, while he can.”

“But, Mrs. Harrington ! surely ! what can the poor young man do ? ”

“He will pay it, my lady.”

“But how, Mrs. Harrington ? ”

“There is his father’s business, my lady.”

His father’s business ! Then must the young man become a tradesman in order to show respect for his father ? Preposterous ! That was the lady’s natural inward exclamation. She said, rather shrewdly, for one who knew nothing of such things : “But a business which produces debts so enormous, Mrs. Harrington ! ”

The widow replied : “My son will have to conduct it in a different way. It would be a very good business, conducted properly, my lady.”

“But if he has no taste for it, Mrs. Harrington ? If he is altogether superior to it ? ”

For the first time during the interview, the widow’s inflexible countenance was mildly moved, though not to any mild expression.

“My son will have not to consult his tastes,” she observed : and seeing the lady, after a short silence, quit her seat, she rose likewise, and touched the fingers of the hand held forth to her, bowing.

“You will pardon the interest I take in your

son," said Lady Roseley. "I hope, indeed, that his relatives and friends will procure him the means of satisfying the demands made upon him."

"He would still have to pay *them*, my lady," was the widow's answer.

"Poor young man! indeed I pity him!" sighed her visitor. "You have hitherto used no efforts to persuade him to take such a step, Mrs. Harrington?"

"I have written to Mr. Goren, who was my husband's fellow apprentice in London, my lady; and he is willing to instruct him in cutting, and measuring, and keeping accounts."

Certain words in this speech were obnoxious to the fine ear of Lady Roseley, and she relinquished the subject.

"Your husband, Mrs. Harrington—I should so much have wished!—he did not pass away in—in pain?"

"He died very calmly, my lady."

"It is so terrible, so disfiguring, sometimes. One dreads to see!—one can hardly distinguish! I have known cases where death was dreadful! But a peaceful death is very beautiful! There is nothing shocking to the mind. It suggests Heaven! It seems a fulfilment of our prayers!"

"Would your ladyship like to look upon him?" said the widow.

Lady Roseley betrayed a sudden gleam at having her desire thus intuitively fathomed.

“For one moment, Mrs. Harrington! We esteemed him so much! May I?”

The widow responded by opening the door, and leading her into the chamber where the dead man lay.

At that period when threats of invasion had formerly stirred up the military fire of us Islanders, the great Mel, as if to show the great Napoleon what character of being a British shop-keeper really was, had, by remarkable favour, obtained a lieutenancy of militia dragoons: in the uniform of which he had revelled, and perhaps for the only time in his life, felt that circumstance had suited him with a perfect fit. However that may be, his solemn final commands to his wife, Henrietta Maria, on whom he could count for absolute obedience in such matters, had been, that as soon as the breath had left his body, he should be taken from his bed, washed, perfumed, powdered, and in that uniform dressed and laid out; with directions that he should be so buried at the expiration of three days, that havoc in his features might be hidden from men. In this array Lady Roseley beheld him. The curtains of the bed were drawn aside. The beams of evening fell soft through the blinds of

the room, and cast a subdued light on the figure of the vanquished warrior. The Presence, dumb now for evermore, was sadly illumined for its last exhibition. But one who looked closely might have seen that Time had somewhat spoiled that perfect fit which had aforetime been his pride; and now that the lofty spirit had departed, there had been extreme difficulty in persuading the sullen excess of clay to conform to the dimensions of those garments. The upper part of the chest alone would bear its buttons, and across one portion of the lower limbs an ancient seam had started; recalling an incident to them who had known him in his brief hour of glory. For one night, as he was riding home from Fallowfield, and just entering the gates of the town, a mounted trooper spurred furiously past, and slashing out at him, gashed his thigh. Mrs. Melchisedec found him lying at his door in a not unwonted way; carried him up-stairs in her arms, as she had done many a time before, and did not perceive his state till she saw the blood on her gown. The cowardly assailant was never discovered; but Mel was both gallant, and, had in his military career, the reputation of being a martinet. Hence, divers causes were suspected. The wound failed not to mend, the trousers were repaired: Peace about the same time was made, and the affair passed over.

Looking on the fine head and face, Lady Roseley saw nothing of this. She had not looked long before she found covert employment for her handkerchief. The widow standing beside her did not weep, or reply to her whispered excuses at emotion; gazing down on his mortal length with a sort of benignant friendliness; aloof, as one whose duties to that form of flesh were well-nigh done. At the feet of his master, Jacko, the monkey, had jumped up, and was there squatted, with his legs crossed, very like a tailor! The imitative wretch had got a towel, and as often as Lady Roseley's handkerchief travelled to her eyes, Jacko's peery face was hidden, and you saw his lithe skinny body doing grief's convulsions: till, tired of this amusement, he obtained possession of the warrior's helmet, from a small round table on one side of the bed; a casque of the barbarous military-Georgian form, with a huge knob of horse-hair projecting over the peak; and under this, trying to adapt it to his rogue's head, the tricky image of Death extinguished himself.

All was very silent in the room. Then the widow quietly disengaged Jacko, and taking him up, went to the door, and deposited him outside. During her momentary absence, Lady Roseley had time to touch the dead man's forehead with her lips, unseen.

CHAPTER III.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE SHEARS.

THREE daughters and a son were left to the world by Mr. Melchisedec. Love, well endowed, had already claimed to provide for the daughters: first in the shape of a lean Marine subaltern, whose days of obscurity had now passed, and who had come to be a major of that corps: secondly, presenting his addresses as a brewer of distinction: thirdly, and for a climax, as a Portuguese Count: no other than the Señor Silva Diaz, Conde de Saldar: and this match did seem a far more resplendent one than that of the two elder sisters with Major Strike and Mr. Andrew Cogglesby. But the rays of neither fell visibly on Lymport. These escaped Eurydices never reappeared, after being once fairly caught away from the gloomy realms of Dis, otherwise Trade. All three persons of singular beauty, a certain refinement, some Port, and some Presence, hereditarily combined, they feared the clutch of that fell king, and performed the widest possible circles around him. Not one of them ever approached the house of her parents. They were dutiful and loving

children, and wrote frequently ; but of course they had to consider their new position, and their husbands, and their husbands' families, and the world, and what it would say, if to it the dreaded rumour should penetrate ! Lymport gossips, as numerous as in other parts, declared that the foreign nobleman would rave in an extraordinary manner, and do things after the outlandish fashion of his country : for from him, there was no doubt, the shop had been most successfully veiled, and he knew not of Pluto's close relationship to his lovely spouse.

The marriages had happened in this way. Balls are given in country towns, where the graces of tradesmen's daughters may be witnessed and admired at leisure by other than tradesmen : by occasional country gentlemen of the neighbourhood, with light minds : and also by small officers ; subalterns wishing to do tender execution upon man's fair enemy, and to find a distraction for their legs. The classes of our social fabric have, here and there, slight connecting links, and provincial public balls are one of these. They are dangerous, for Cupid is no respecter of class-prejudice ; and if you are the son of a retired tea-merchant, or of a village doctor, or of a half-pay captain, or of anything superior, and visit one of them, you are as likely to receive his shot as any shopboy. Even masquerading lords at such

places, have been known to be slain out-right ; and although Society allows to its highest and dearest to save the honour of their families, and heal their anguish, by indecorous compromise, you, if you are a trifle below that mark, must not expect it. You must absolutely give yourself for what you hope to get. Dreadful as it sounds to philosophic ears, you must marry. This, having danced with Caroline Harrington, the gallant Lieutenant Strike determined to do. Nor, when he became aware of her father's occupation, did he shrink from his resolve. After a month's hard courtship, he married her straight out of her father's house. That he may have all the credit due to him, it must be admitted that he did not once compare, or possibly permit himself to reflect on, the dissimilarity in their respective ranks, and the step he had taken downward, till they were man and wife : and then not in any great degree, before Fortune had given him his majority ; an advance the good soldier frankly told his wife he did not owe to her. If we may be permitted to suppose the colonel of a regiment on friendly terms with one of his corporals, we have an estimate of the domestic life of Major and Mrs. Strike. Among the garrison males, his comrades, he passed for a disgustingly jealous brute. The ladies, in their pretty language, signalled him as a " finick."

Now, having achieved so capital a marriage, Caroline, worthy creature, was anxious that her sisters should not be less happy, and would have them to visit her, in spite of her husband's protests.

"There can be no danger," she said, for she was in fresh quarters, far from the nest of contagion. The lieutenant himself ungrudgingly declared that, looking on the ladies, no one for an instant could suspect; and he saw many young fellows ready to be as great fools as he had been: another voluntary confession he made to his wife; for the candour of which she thanked him, and pointed out that it seemed to run in the family; inasmuch as Mr. Andrew Cogglesby, his rich relative, had seen and had proposed for Harriet. The lieutenant flatly said he would never allow it. In fact he had hitherto concealed the non-presentable portion of his folly very satisfactorily from all save the mess-room, and Mr. Andrew's passion was a severe dilemma to him. It need scarcely be told that his wife, fortified by the fervid brewer, defeated him utterly. What was more, she induced him to be an accomplice in deception. For though the lieutenant protested that he washed his hands of it, and that it was a fraud and a snare, he certainly did not avow the condition of his wife's parents to Mr. Andrew, but alluded to them in passing as "the country people." He supposed "the country people"

must be asked, he said. The brewer offered to go down to them. But the lieutenant drew an unpleasant picture of the country people, and his wife became so grave at the proposition, that Mr. Andrew said, he wanted to marry the lady, and not the "country people," and if she would have him, there he was. There he was, behaving with a particular and sagacious kindness to the raw lieutenant since Harriet's arrival. If the lieutenant sent her away, Mr. Andrew would infallibly pursue her, and light on a discovery. Twice cursed by Love, twice the victim of tailordom, our excellent Marine gave away Harriet Harrington in marriage to Mr. Andrew Cogglesby.

Thus Joy clapped hands a second time, and Horror deepened its shadows.

From higher ground it was natural that the concluding sister should take a bolder flight. Of the loves of the fair Louisa Harrington and the foreign Count, and how she first encountered him in the brewer's saloons, and how she, being a humorous person, laughed at his "loaf" for her, and wore the colours that pleased him, and kindled and soothed his jealousy, little is known beyond the fact that she espoused the Count, under the auspices of the affluent brewer, and engaged that her children should be brought up in the faith of the Catholic Church: which Lymport gossips called, paying the Devil for her pride.

The three sisters, gloriously rescued by their own charms, had now to think of their one young brother. How to make him a gentleman! That was their problem. Preserve him from tailordom—from all contact with trade—they must; otherwise they would be perpetually linked to the horrid thing they hoped to outlive and bury. A cousin of Mr. Melchisedec's had risen to be an admiral and a knight for valiant action in the old war, when men could rise. Him they besought to take charge of the youth, and make a distinguished seaman of him. He courteously declined. They then attacked the married Marine—navy or army being quite indifferent to them, as long as they could win for their brother the badge of one service, "When he is a gentleman at once!" they said, like those who see the end of their labours. Strike basely pretended to second them. It would have been delightful to him, of course, to have the tailor's son messing at the same table, and claiming him when he pleased with a familiar "Ah, brother!" and prating of their relationship everywhere. Strike *had* been a fool: in revenge for it, he laid out for himself a masterly career of consequent wisdom. The brewer—uxorious Andrew Cogglesby—might and would have bought the commission. Strike laughed at the idea of giving money for what could be got for nothing. He told them to wait.

In the meantime Evan, a lad of seventeen, spent the hours not devoted to his positive profession—that of gentleman—in the offices of the brewery, toying with big books and balances, which he despised with the combined zeal of the sucking soldier and emancipated tailor.

Two years passed in attendance on the astute brother-in-law, to whom Fortune now beckoned to come to her and gather his laurels from the pig-tails. About the same time the Countess sailed over from Lisbon on a visit to her sister Harriet (in reality, it was whispered in the Cogglesby saloons, on a diplomatic mission from the Court of Lisbon; but that could not be made ostensible). The Countess narrowly examined Evan, whose steady advance in his profession both her sisters praised.

“Yes,” said the Countess, in a languid alien accent. “He has something of his father’s carriage—something. Something of his delivery—his readiness.”

It was a remarkable thing that these ladies thought no man on earth like their father, and always cited him as the example of a perfect gentleman, and yet they buried him with one mind, and each mounted guard over his sepulchre, to secure his ghost from an airing.

“He can walk, my dears, certainly, and talk—a little. *Tête-à-tête*, I do not say. I should

think *there* he would be—a stick! All you English are. But what sort of a bow has he got, I ask you? How does he enter a room? And, then his smile! his laugh! He laughs like a horse—absolutely! There's no *music* in his smile. Oh! you should see a Portuguese nobleman smile. Oh! Dios! honeyed, my dears! But Evan has it not. None of you English have. You go so."

The Countess pressed a thumb and finger to the sides of her mouth, and set her sisters laughing.

"I assure you, no better! not a bit! I faint in your society. I ask myself—Where am I? Among what boors have I fallen? But Evan is no worse than the rest of you; I acknowledge that. If he knew how to dress his shoulders properly, and to direct his eyes—Oh! the eyes! you should see how a Portuguese nobleman can use his eyes! Soul! my dears! soul! Can any of you look the unutterable without being absurd! You look so."

And the Countess hung her jaw under heavily vacuous orbits, something as a sheep might yawn.

"But I acknowledge that Evan is no worse than the rest of you," she repeated. "If he understood at all the management of his eyes and mouth! But that's what he cannot possibly learn in England—not possibly! As for your poor husband, Harriet! one really has to remember his

excellent qualities to forgive him, poor man! And that stiff bandbox of a man of yours, Caroline!" addressing the wife of the Marine, "he looks as if he were all angles and sections, and were taken to pieces every night and put together in the morning. He may be a good soldier—good anything you will—but, Dios! to be married to that! He is not civilised. None of you English are. You have no place in the drawing-room. You are like so many intrusive oxen—absolutely! One of your men trod on my toe the other night, and what do you think the creature did? Jerks back, then the half of him forward—I thought he was going to break in two—then grins, and grunts, 'Oh! 'm sure, beg pardon, 'm sure!' I don't know whether he didn't say, MA'AM!"

The Countess lifted her hands, and fell away in laughing horror. When her humour, or her feelings generally, were a little excited, she spoke her vernacular as her sisters did, but immediately subsided into the deliberate delicately-syllabled drawl.

"Now that happened to me once at one of our great balls," she pursued. "I had on one side of me the Duchesse Eugenia de Formosa de Fontandigua; on the other sat the Countess de Pel, a widow. And we were talking of the ices that evening. Eugenia, you must know, my dears, was in love with the Count Belmaraña. I was

her sole confidante. The Countess de Pel—a horrible creature! Oh! she was the Duchess's determined enemy—would have stabbed her for Belmaraña, one of the most beautiful men! Adored by every woman! So we talked ices, Eugenia and myself, quite comfortably, and that horrible De Pel had no idea in life! Eugenia had just said, 'This ice sickens me! I do not taste the flavour of the vanille.' I answered, 'It is here! It must—it cannot but be here! You love the flavour of the vanille?' With her exquisite smile, I see her now saying, 'Too well! it is necessary to me! I live on it!' when up he came. In his eagerness, his foot just effleuréd my robe. Oh! I never shall forget! In an instant he was down on one knee: it was so momentary that none saw it but we three, and done with ineffable grace. 'Pardon!' he said, in his sweet Portuguese; 'Pardon!' looking up—the handsomest man I ever beheld; and when I think of that odious wretch the other night, with his 'Oh! 'm sure, beg pardon, 'm sure!—'pon my honour!' I could have kicked him—I could indeed!"

Here the Countess laughed out, but relapsed into :

"Alas! that Belmaraña should have betrayed that beautiful trusting creature to De Pel. Such scandal!—a duel!—the Duke was wounded. For a whole year Eugenia did not dare to appear at

court, but had to remain immured in her country-house, where she heard that Belmaraña had married De Pel! It was for her money, of course. Rich as Cræsus, and as wicked as the black man below! as dear papa used to say. By the way, weren't we talking of Evan? Ah,—yes!"

And so forth. The Countess was immensely admired, and though her sisters said that she was "foreignised" over-much, they clung to her desperately. She seemed so entirely to have eclipsed tailordom, or "Demogorgon," as the Countess pleased to call it. Who could suppose this grand-mannered lady, with her coroneted anecdotes and delicious breeding, the daughter of that thing? It was not possible to suppose it. It seemed to defy the fact itself.

They congratulated her on her complete escape from Demogorgon. The Countess smiled on them with a lovely sorrow.

"Safe from the whisper, my dears; the ceaseless dread? If you knew what I have to endure! I sometimes envy you. 'Pon my honour, I sometimes wish I had married a fishmonger! Silva, indeed, is a most excellent husband. Polished! such polish as you know not of in England. He has a way—a wriggle with his shoulders in company—I cannot describe it to you; so slight! so elegant! and he is all that a woman could desire. But who could be safe in any part of the earth,

my dears, while papa will go about so, and behave so extraordinarily? I was at dinner at the embassy a month or two ago, and there was Admiral Combleman, then on the station off Lisbon, Sir Jackson Roseley's friend, who was the admiral at Lympport formerly. I knew him at once, and thought, oh! what shall I do! My heart was like a lump of lead. I would have given worlds that we might have one of us smothered the other! I had to sit beside him—it always happens! Thank heaven! he did not identify me. And then he told an anecdote of papa. It was the dreadful old 'Bath' story. I thought I should have died. I could not but fancy the Admiral suspected. Was it not natural? And what do you think I had the audacity to do? I asked him coolly, whether the Mr. Harrington he mentioned was not the son of Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay,—the gentleman who lost his yacht in the Lisbon waters, last year? I brought it on myself. 'Gentleman, ma'am,'—MA'AM! says the horrid old creature, laughing,—'gentleman! he's a——' I cannot speak it: I choke! And then he began praising papa. Dios! what I suffered. But, you know, I can keep my countenance, if I perish. I am a Harrington as much as any of us!"

And the Countess looked superb in the pride with which she said she was what she would have

given her hand not to be. But few feelings are single on this globe, and junction of sentiments need not imply unity in our yeasty compositions.

“After it was over—my supplice,” continued the Countess, “I was questioned by all the ladies—I mean *our* ladies—not your English. They wanted to know how I could be so civil to that intolerable man. I gained a deal of credit, my dears. I laid it all on—Diplomacy.” The Countess laughed bitterly. “Diplomacy bears the burden of it all. I pretended that Combleman could be useful to Silva. Oh! what hypocrites we all are!”

The ladies listening could not gainsay this favourite claim of universal brotherhood among the select who wear masks instead of faces.

With regard to Evan, the Countess had far outstripped her sisters in her views. A gentleman she had discovered must have one of two things—a title or money. He might have all the breeding in the world; he might be as good as an angel; but without a title or money he was under eclipse almost total. On a gentleman the sun must shine. Now, Evan had no title, no money. The clouds were thick above the youth. To gain a title he would have to scale aged mountains. There was one break in his firmament through which the radiant luminary might be assisted to

cast its beams on him still young. That divine portal was matrimony. If he could but make a rich marriage he would blaze transfigured; all would be well! And why should not Evan marry an heiress, as well as another?

“I know a young creature who would exactly suit him,” said the Countess. “She is related to the embassy, and is in Lisbon now. A charming child—just sixteen! Dios! how the men rave about her! and she isn’t a beauty,—there’s the wonder; and she is a little too gauche—too English in her habits and ways of thinking; likes to be admired, of course, but doesn’t know *yet* how to set about getting it. She rather scandalises our ladies, but when you know her!— She will have, they say, a hundred thousand pounds in her own right! Rose Jocelyn, the daughter of Sir Franks, and that eccentric Lady Jocelyn. She is with her uncle, Melville, the celebrated diplomat—though, to tell you the truth, we turn him round our fingers, and spin him as the boys used to do the cockchafers. I cannot forget our old Fallowfield school-life, you see, my dears. Well, Rose Jocelyn would just suit Evan. She is just of an age to receive an impression. And *I* would take care she did. Instance me a case where I have failed?

“Or there is the Portuguese widow, the Rostral. She’s thirty, certainly; but she possesses millions! Estates all over the kingdom, and the sweetest

creature. But, no. Evan would be out of the way there, certainly. But—our women are very nice: they have the dearest, sweetest ways: but I would rather Evan did not marry one of them. And then there's the religion!"

This was a sore of the Countess's own, and she dropped a tear in coming across it.

"No, my dears, it shall be Rose Jocelyn!" she concluded: "I will take Evan over with me, and see that he has opportunities. It shall be Rose, and then I *can* call her mine; for in verity I love the child."

It is not my part to dispute the Countess's love for Miss Jocelyn; and I have only to add that Evan, unaware of the soft training he was to undergo, and the brilliant chance in store for him, offered no impediment to the proposition that he should journey to Portugal with his aunt (whose subtlest flattery was to tell him that she should not be ashamed to own him there); and ultimately, furnished with cash for the trip by the remonstrating brewer, went.

So these Parcæ, daughters of the shears, arranged and settled the young man's fate. His task was to learn the management of his mouth, how to dress his shoulders properly, and to direct his eyes—rare qualities in man or woman, I assure you; the management of the mouth being especially admirable, and correspondingly difficult.

These achieved, he was to place his battery in position, and win the heart and hand of an heiress.

Our comedy opens with his return from Portugal, in company with Miss Rose, the heiress; the Honourable Melville Jocelyn, the diplomate; and the Count and Countess de Saldar, refugees out of that explosive little kingdom.

CHAPTER IV.

ON BOARD THE JOCASTA.

FROM the Tagus to the Thames the Government sloop-of-war, *Jocasta*, had made a prosperous voyage, bearing that precious freight, a removed diplomatist and his family; for whose uses let a sufficient vindication be found in the exercise he affords our crews in the science of seamanship. She entered our noble river somewhat early on a fine July morning. Early as it was, two young people, who had nothing to do with the trimming or guiding of the vessel, stood on deck, and watched the double-shore, beginning to embrace them more and more closely as they sailed onward. One, a young lady, very young in manner, wore a black felt hat with a floating scarlet feather, and was clad about the shoulders in a mantle of foreign style and pattern. The other you might have taken for a wandering Don, were such an object ever known; so simply he assumed the dusky sombrero and dangling cloak, of which one fold was flung across his breast and drooped behind him. The line of an adolescent dark

moustache ran along his lip, and only at intervals could you see that his eyes were blue and of the land he was nearing. For the youth was meditative, and held his head much down. The young lady, on the contrary, permitted an open inspection of her countenance, and seemed, for the moment at least, to be neither caring nor thinking of what kind of judgment would be passed on her. Her pretty nose was up, sniffing the still salt breeze with vivacious delight.

“Oh!” she cried, clapping her hands, “there goes a dear old English gull! How I have wished to see him! I haven’t seen one for two years and seven months. When I’m at home, I’ll leave my window open all night, just to hear the rooks, when they wake in the morning. There goes another dear old gull! I’m sure they’re not like foreign ones! Do you think they are?”

Without waiting for a reply, she tossed up her nose again, exclaiming:

“I’m sure I smell England nearer and nearer! Don’t you? I smell the fields, and the cows in them. I declare I’d have given anything to be a dairy-maid for half an hour! I used to lie and pant in that stifling air among those stupid people, and wonder why anybody ever left England. Aren’t you glad to come back?”

This time the fair speaker lent her eyes to the question, and shut her lips: sweet, cold, chaste

lips she had : a mouth that had not yet dreamed of kisses, and most honest eyes.

The young man felt that they were not to be satisfied by his own, and after seeking to fill them with a doleful look, which was immediately succeeded by one of superhuman indifference, he answered :

“Yes! We shall soon have to part!” and commenced tapping with his foot the cheerful martyr’s march.

Speech that has to be hauled from the depths usually betrays the effort. Listening an instant to catch the import of this cavernous gasp upon the brink of sound, the girl said :

“Part? what *do* you mean?”

Apparently it required a yet vaster effort to pronounce an explanation. The doleful look, the superhuman indifference were repeated in due order : sound a little more distinct, uttered the words :

“We cannot remain as we have been, in England!” and then the cheerful martyr took a few steps farther.

“Why, you don’t mean to say you’re going to give me up, and not be friends with me, because we’ve come back to England?” cried the girl in a rapid breath, eyeing him seriously.

Most conscientiously he did not mean it; but he replied with the quietest negative.

“No?” she mimicked him. “Why do you say ‘No’ like that? Why are you so mysterious, Evan? Won’t you promise me to come and stop with us for weeks? Haven’t you said we would ride, and hunt, and fish together, and read books, and do all sorts of things?”

He replied with the quietest affirmative.

“Yes? What does ‘Yes!’ mean?” She lifted her chest to shake out the dead-alive monosyllable, as he had done. “Why are you so singular this morning, Evan? Have I offended you? You are so touchy!”

The slur on his reputation for sensitiveness induced the young man to attempt being more explicit.

“I mean,” he said, hesitating; “why, we must part. We shall not see each other every day. Nothing more than that.” And away went the cheerful martyr in his sublimest mood.

“Oh! and *that* makes you sorry?” A shade of archness was in her voice.

The girl waited as if to collect something in her mind, and was now a patronising woman.

“Why, you dear sentimental boy! You don’t suppose we could see each other every day for *ever*?”

It was perhaps the cruelest question that could have been addressed to the sentimental boy from her mouth. But he was a cheerful martyr!

“You dear Don Doloroso!” she resumed. “I declare if you are not just like those young Portugals this morning; and over there you were such a dear English fellow; and that’s why I liked you so much! Do change! Do, please, be lively, and yourself again! Or mind! I’ll call you Don Doloroso, and that shall be your name in England. See there!—that’s—that’s?—what’s the name of that place? Hoy! Mr. Skerne!” She hailed the boatswain, passing, “do tell me the name of that place.”

Mr. Skerne righted about to satisfy her minutely, and then coming up to Evan, he touched his hat, and said:

“I mayn’t have another opportunity—we shall be busy up there—of thankin’ you again, sir, for what you did for my poor drunken brother Bill, and you may take my word I won’t forget it, sir, if he does; and I suppose he’ll be drownin’ his memory just as he was near drowning himself.”

Evan muttered something, grimaced civilly, and turned away. The girl’s observant brows were moved to a faintly critical frown, and nodding intelligently to the boatswain’s remark, that the young gentleman did not seem quite himself, now that he was nearing home, she went up to Evan, and said:

“I’m going to give you a lesson in manners, to

be quits with you. Listen, sir! Why did you turn away so ungraciously from Mr. Skerne, while he was thanking you for having saved his brother's life? Now there's where you're too English. Can't you bear to be thanked?"

"I don't want to be thanked because I can swim," said Evan.

"But it is not that. Oh! how you trifle!" she cried. "There's nothing vexes me so much as that way you have. Wouldn't my eyes have sparkled if anybody had come up to me to thank me for such a thing? I would let them know how glad I was to have done such a thing! Doesn't it make them happier, dear Evan?"

"My dear Miss Jocelyn!"

"What?"

Evan was silent. The honest grey eyes fixed on him, narrowed their enlarged lids. She gazed before her on the deck, saying:

"I'm sure I can't understand you. I suppose it's because I'm a girl, and I never shall till I'm a woman. Heigho!"

A youth who is engaged in the occupation of eating his heart, cannot shine to advantage, and is as much a burden to himself as he is an enigma to others. Evan felt this; but he could do nothing and say nothing; so he retired deeper into the folds of the Don, and remained picturesque and scarcely pleasant.

They were relieved by a summons to breakfast from below.

She brightened and laughed. "Now, what will you wager me, Evan, that the Countess doesn't begin: 'Sweet child! how does she this morning? blooming?' when she kisses me?"

Her capital imitation of his sister's manner constrained him to join in her laugh, and he said:

"I'll back against that, I get three fingers from your uncle, and 'Morrow, young sir!'"

Down they ran together, laughing; and, sure enough, the identical words of the respective greetings were employed, which they had to enjoy with all the discretion they could muster.

Rose went round the table to her little cousin Alec, aged seven, kissed his reluctant cheek, and sat beside him, announcing a sea appetite and great capabilities, while Evan silently broke bread. The Count de Saldar, a diminutive tawny man, just a head and neck above the tablecloth, sat sipping chocolate and fingering dry toast, which he would now and then dip in jelly, and suck with placidity, in the intervals of a curt exchange of French with the wife of the Hon. Melville, a ringleted English lady, or of Portuguese with the Countess, who likewise sipped chocolate and fingered dry toast, and was mournfully melodious. The Hon. Melville, as became a

tall islander, carved beef, and ate of it, like a ruler of men. Beautiful to see was the compassionate sympathy of the Countess's face when Rose offered her plate for a portion of the world-subjugating viand, as who should say: "Sweet child! thou knowest not yet of sorrows, thou canst ballast thy stomach with beef!" In any other than an heiress, she would probably have thought: "This is indeed a disgusting little animal, and most unfeminine conduct!"

Rose, unconscious of praise or blame, rivalled her uncle in enjoyment of the fare, and talked of her delight in seeing England again, and anything that belonged to her native land. Mrs. Melville perceived that it pained the refugee Countess, and gave her the glance intelligible; but the Countess never missed glances, or failed to interpret them. She said:

"Let her. I love to hear the sweet child's prattle."

"It was fortunate" (she addressed the diplomatist) "that we touched at Southampton and procured fresh provision!"

"Very lucky for *us*!" said he, glaring shrewdly between a mouthful.

The Count heard the word "Southampton," and wished to know how it was comprised. A passage of Portuguese ensued, and then the Countess said:

“Silva, you know, desired to relinquish the vessel at Southampton. He does not comprehend the word ‘expense,’ but” (she shook a dumb Alas!) “I must think of that for him now!”

“Oh! always avoid expense,” said the Hon. Melville, accustomed to be paid for by his country.

“At what time shall we arrive, may I ask, do you think?” the Countess gently inquired.

The watch of a man who had his eye on Time was pulled out, and she was told it might be two hours before dark. Another reckoning, keenly balanced, informed the company that the day’s papers could be expected on board somewhere about three o’clock in the afternoon.

“And then,” said the Hon. Melville, nodding general gratulation, “we shall know how the world wags.”

How it had been wagging the Countess’s straining eyes under closed eyelids were eloquent of.

“Too late, I fear me, to wait upon Lord Livelyston to-night?” she suggested.

“To-night?” The Hon. Melville gazed blank astonishment at the notion. “Oh! certainly, too late to-night. A—hum! I think, madam, you had better not be in too great a hurry to see him. Repose a little. Recover your fatigue.”

“Oh!” exclaimed the Countess, with a beam of utter confidence in him, “I shall be too happy to place myself in your hands—believe me.”

This was scarcely more to the taste of the diplomatist. He put up his mouth, and said, blandly:

“I fear—you know, madam, I must warn you beforehand—I, personally, am but an insignificant unit over here, you know; I, personally, can't guarantee much assistance to you—not positive. What I can do—of course, very happy!” And he fell to again upon the beef.

“Not so very insignificant!” said the Countess, smiling, as at a softly radiant conception of him.

“Have to bob and bow like the rest of them over here,” he added, proof against the flattery.

“But that you will not forsake Silva, I am convinced,” said the Countess; and, paying little heed to his brief “Oh! what I *can* do,” continued, “for over here, in England, we are almost friendless. My relations—such as are left of them—are not in high place.” She turned to Mrs. Melville, and renewed the confession with a proud humility. “Truly, I have not a distant cousin in the Cabinet!”

Mrs. Melville met her sad smile, and returned it, as one who understood its entire import.

“My brother-in-law—my sister, I think, you know—married a—a brewer! He is rich; but, well! such was her taste! My brother-in-law is indeed in Parliament, and he—”

“Very little use, seeing he votes with the

opposite party," the diplomatist interrupted her.

"Ah! but he will not," said the Countess, serenely. "I can trust with confidence that, if it is for Silva's interest, he will assuredly so dispose of his influence as to suit the desiderations of his family, and not in any way oppose his opinions to the powers that would willingly stoop to serve us!"

It was impossible for the Hon. Melville to withhold a slight grimace at his beef, when he heard this extremely alienised idea of the nature of a member of the Parliament of Great Britain. He allowed her to enjoy her delusion, as she pursued:

"No. So much we could offer in repayment. It is little! But this, in verity, is a case. Silva's wrongs have only to be known in England, and I am most assured that the English people will not permit it. In the days of his prosperity, Silva was a friend to England, and England should not—should not—forget it now. Had we money! But of that arm our enemies have deprived us: and, I fear, without it we cannot hope to have the justice of our cause pleaded in the English papers. Mr. Redner, you know, the correspondent in Lisbon, is a sworn foe to Silva. And why but because I would not procure him an invitation to Court! The man was so horridly vulgar; his gloves were never clean; I had to

hold a bouquet to my nose when I talked to him. That, you say, was my fault! Truly so. But what woman can be civil to a low bred, pretentious, offensive man?"

Mrs. Melville, again appealed to, smiled perfect sympathy, and said, to account for his character:

"Yes. He is the son of a small shopkeeper of some kind, in Southampton, I hear."

"A very good fellow in his way," said her husband.

"Oh! I can't bear that class of people," Rose exclaimed. "I always keep out of their way. You can always tell them."

The Countess smiled considerate approbation of her exclusiveness and discernment. So sweet a smile!

"You were on deck early, my dear?" she asked Evan, rather abruptly.

Master Alec answered for him: "Yes, he was, and so was Rose. They made an appointment, just as they used to do under the oranges."

"Children!" the Countess smiled to Mrs. Melville.

"They always whisper when I'm by," Alec appended.

"Children!" the Countess's sweetened visage entreated Mrs. Melville to re-echo; but that lady thought it best for the moment to direct Rose

to look to her packing, now that she had done breakfast.

“And I will take a walk with my brother on deck,” said the Countess. “Silva is too harassed for converse.”

The parties were thus divided. The silent Count was left to mediate on his wrongs in the saloon; and the diplomatist, alone with his lady, thought fit to say to her, shortly: “Perhaps it would be as well to draw away from these people a little. We’ve done as much as we could for them, in bringing them over here. They *may* be trying to compromise us. That woman’s absurd. She’s ashamed of the brewer, and yet she wants to sell him—or wants us to buy him. Ha! I think she wants us to send a couple of frigates, and threaten bombard of the capital, if they don’t take her husband back, and receive him with honours.”

“Perhaps it would be as well,” said Mrs. Melville. “Rose’s invitation to him goes for nothing.”

“Rose? inviting the Count? down to Hampshire?” The diplomatist’s brows were lifted.

“No, I mean the other,” said the diplomatist’s wife.

“Oh! the young fellow! very good young fellow. Gentlemanly. No harm in him.”

“Perhaps not,” said the diplomatist’s wife.

“You don’t suppose he expects us to keep him on, or provide for him over here—eh?”

The diplomatist’s wife informed him that such was not her thought, that he did not understand, and that it did not matter; and as soon as the Hon. Melville saw that she was brooding something essentially feminine, and which had no relationship to the great game of public life, curiosity was extinguished in him.

On deck the Countess paced with Evan, and was for a time pleasantly diverted by the admiration she could, without looking, perceive that her sorrow-subdued graces had aroused in the breast of a susceptible naval lieutenant. At last she spoke:

“My dear! remember this. Your last word to Mr. Jocelyn will be: ‘I will do myself the honour to call upon my benefactor early.’ To Rose you will say: ‘Be assured, Miss Jocelyn’—*Miss Jocelyn* is better just then—‘I shall not fail in hastening to pay my respects to your family in Hampshire.’ You will remember to do it, in the exact form I speak it.”

Evan laughed: “What! call him benefactor to his face? I couldn’t do it.”

“Ah! my child!”

“Besides, he isn’t a benefactor at all. His private secretary died, and I stepped in to fill the post, because nobody else was handy.”

“And tell me of her who pushed you forward, Evan?”

“My dear sister, I’m sure I’m not ungrateful.”

“No; but headstrong: opinionated. Now these people will endeavour—Oh! I have seen it in a thousand little things—they wish to shake us off. Now, if you will but do as I indicate! Put your faith in an older head, Evan. It is your only chance of society in England. For your brother-in-law—I ask you, what sort of people will you meet at the Cogglesbys? Now and then a nobleman, very much out of his element. In short, you have fed upon a diet which will make you to distinguish, and painfully to know the difference! Indeed! Yes, you are looking about for Rose. It depends upon your behaviour now, whether you are to see her at all in England. Do you forget? You wished once to inform her of your origin. Think of her words at the breakfast this morning!”

The Countess imagined she had produced an impression. Evan said: “Yes, and I should have liked to have told her this morning that I’m myself nothing more than the son of a—”

“Stop!” cried his sister, glancing about in horror. The admiring lieutenant met her eye. Blandishingly she smiled on him: “Most beautiful weather for a welcome to dear England?” and passed with majesty.

“ Boy ! ” she resumed, “ are you mad ? ”

“ I hate being such a hypocrite, madam. ”

“ Then you do not love her, Evan ? ”

This may have been dubious logic, but it resulted from a clear sequence of ideas in the lady’s head. Evan did not contest it.

“ And assuredly you will lose her, Evan. Think of my troubles ! I have to intrigue for Silva ; I look to your future ; I smile, Oh, Heaven ! how do I not smile when things are spoken that pierce my heart ! This morning at the breakfast ! ”

Evan took her hand, and patted it tenderly.

“ What is your pity ? ” she sighed.

“ If it had not been for you, my dear sister, I should never have held my tongue. ”

“ You are not a Harrington ! You are a Dawley ! ” she exclaimed, indignantly.

Evan received the accusation of possessing more of his mother’s spirit than his father’s in silence.

“ You would not have held your tongue, ” she said, with fervid severity : “ and you would have betrayed yourself ! and you would have said you were *that* ! and you in that costume ! Why, goodness gracious ! could you bear to appear so ridiculous ? ”

The poor young man involuntarily surveyed his person. The pains of an imposter seized him. The deplorable image of the Don making con-

fession became present to his mind. It was a clever stroke of this female intriguer. She saw him redden grievously, and blink his eyes; and not wishing to probe him so that he would feel intolerable disgust at his imprisonment in the Don, she continued:

“But you have the sense to see your duties, Evan. You have an excellent sense, in the main. No one would dream—to see you. You did not, I must say, you did not make enough of your gallantry. A Portuguese who had saved a man’s life, Evan, would he have been so boorish? You behaved as if it was a matter of course that you should go overboard after anybody, in your clothes, on a dark night. So, then, the Jocelyns took it. I barely heard one compliment to you. And Rose—what an effect it should have had on her! But, owing to your manner, I do believe the girl thinks it nothing but your ordinary business to go overboard after anybody, in your clothes, on a dark night. ’Pon my honour, I believe she expects to see you always dripping!” The Countess uttered a burst of hysterical humour. “So you miss your credit. That inebriated sailor should really have been gold to you. Be not so young and thoughtless.”

The Countess then proceeded to tell him how foolishly he had let slip his great opportunity. A Portuguese would have fixed the young lady

long before. By tender moonlight, in captivating language, beneath the umbrageous orange-groves, a Portuguese would have accurately calculated the effect of the perfume of the blossom on her sensitive nostrils, and known the exact moment when to kneel, and declare his passion sonorously.

“Yes,” said Evan, “one of them did. She told me.”

“She told you? And you—what did you do?”

“Laughed at him with her, to be sure.”

“Laughed at him! She told you, and you helped her to laugh at love! Have you no perceptions? Why did she tell you?”

“Because she thought him such a fool, I suppose.”

“You never will know a woman,” said the Countess, with contempt.

Much of his worldly sister at a time was more than Evan could bear. Accustomed to the symptoms of restiveness, she finished her discourse, enjoyed a quiet parade up and down under the gaze of the lieutenant, and could find leisure to note whether she at all struck the inferior seamen, even while her mind was absorbed by the multiform troubles and anxieties for which she took such innocent indemnification.

The appearance of the Hon. Melville Jocelyn

on deck, and without his wife, recalled her to business. It is a peculiarity of female diplomatists that they fear none save their own sex. Men they regard as their natural prey : in women they see rival hunters using their own weapons. The Countess smiled a slowly-kindling smile up to him, set her brother adrift, and delicately linked herself to Evan's benefactor.

"I have been thinking," she said, "knowing your kind and most considerate attentions, that we may compromise you in England."

He at once assured her he hoped not, he thought not at all.

"The idea is due to my brother," she went on; "for I—women know so little!—and most guiltlessly should we have done so. My brother perhaps does not think of us foremost; but his argument I can distinguish. I can see that, were you openly to plead Silva's cause, you might bring yourself into odium, Mr. Jocelyn; and Heaven knows I would not that! May I then ask, that in England we may be simply upon the same footing of private friendship?"

The diplomatist looked into her uplifted visage, that had all the sugary sparkles of a crystallised preserved fruit of the Portugal clime, and observed, confidentially, that, with every willingness in the world to serve her, he did think it would possibly be better, for a time,

to be upon that footing, apart from political considerations.

“I was very sure my brother would apprehend your views,” said the Countess. “He, poor boy! his career is closed. He must sink into a different sphere. He will greatly miss the intercourse with you and your sweet family.”

Further relieved, the diplomatist delivered a high opinion of the young gentleman, his abilities, and his conduct, and trusted he should see him frequently.

By an apparent sacrifice, the lady thus obtained what she wanted.

Near the hour speculated on by the diplomatist, the papers came on board, and he, unaware how he had been manœuvred for lack of a wife at his elbow, was quickly engaged in appeasing the great British hunger for news; second only to that for beef, it seems, and equally acceptable salted when it cannot be had fresh.

Leaving the devotee of statecraft with his legs crossed, and his face wearing the cognisant air of one whose head is above the waters of events, to enjoy the mighty meal of fresh and salted at discretion, the Countess dived below.

Meantime the Jocasta, as smoothly as before she was ignorant of how the world wagged, slipped up the river with the tide; and the sun hung red behind the forest of masts, burnishing

a broad length of the serpentine haven of the nations of the earth. A young Englishman returning home can hardly look on this scene without some pride of kinship. Evan stood at the fore part of the vessel. Rose, in quiet English attire, had escaped from her aunt to join him, singing in his ears, to spur his senses: "Isn't it beautiful? Isn't it beautiful? Dear old England!"

"What do you find so beautiful?" he asked.

"Oh, you dull fellow! Why the ships, and the houses, and the smoke, to be sure."

"The ships? Why, I thought you despised trade, mademoiselle?"

"And so I do. That is, not trade, but tradesmen. Of course, I mean shopkeepers."

"It's they who send the ships to and fro, and make the picture that pleases you, nevertheless."

"Do they?" said she, indifferently, and then with a sort of fervour, "Why do you always grow so cold to me whenever we get on this subject?"

"I, cold?" Evan responded. The incessant fears of his diplomatic sister had succeeded in making him painfully jealous of this subject. He turned it off. "Why, our feelings are just the same. Do you know what I was thinking when you came up? I was thinking that I hoped I

might never disgrace the name of an Englishman."

"Now, that's noble!" cried the girl. "And I'm sure you never will. Of an English *gentleman*, Evan. I like that better."

"Would you rather be called a true English lady than a true English woman, Rose?"

"Don't think I would, my dear," she answered pertly; "but 'gentleman' always means more than 'man' to me."

"And what's a gentleman, mademoiselle?"

"Can't tell you, Don Doloroso. Something you are, sir," she added, surveying him.

Evan sucked the bitter and the sweet of her explanation. His sister in her anxiety to put him on his guard, had not beguiled him to forget his real state.

His sister, the diplomatist and his lady, the refugee Count, with ladies' maids, servants, and luggage, were now on the main-deck, and Master Alec, who was as good as a newspaper correspondent for private conversations, put an end to the colloquy of the young people. They were all assembled in a circle when the vessel came to her moorings. The diplomatist gluttoned with news, and thirsting for confirmations; the Count dumb, courteous, and quick-eyed; the honourable lady complacent in the consciousness of boxes well packed; the Countess breathing mellifluous long-

drawn adieux that should provoke invitations. Evan and Rose regarded each other.

The boat to convey them on shore was being lowered, and they were preparing to move forward. Just then the vessel was boarded by a stranger.

“Is that one of the creatures of your Customs? I did imagine we were safe from them,” exclaimed the Countess.

The diplomatist laughingly requested her to save herself anxiety on that score, while under his wing. But she had drawn attention to the intruder, who was seen addressing one of the midshipmen. He was a man in a long brown coat and loose white neckcloth, spectacles on nose, which he wore considerably below the bridge and peered over, as if their main use were to sight his eye; a beaver hat, with broadish brim, on his head. A man of no station, it was evident to the ladies at once, and they would have taken no further notice of him had he not been seen stepping towards them in the rear of the young midshipman.

The latter came to Evan, and said: “A fellow of the name of Goren wants you. Says there’s something the matter at home.”

Evan advanced, and bowed stiffly.

Mr. Goren held out his hand. “You don’t remember me, young man? I cut out your first

suit for you when you were breeched, though! Yes—ah! Your poor father wouldn't put his hand to it. Goren!"

Embarrassed, and not quite alive to the chapter of facts this name should have opened to him, Evan bowed again.

"Goren!" continued the possessor of the name. He had a cracked voice that, when he spoke a word of two syllables, commenced with a lugubrious crow, and ended in what one might have taken for a curious question.

"It is a bad business brings me, young man. I'm not the best messenger for such tidings. It's a black suit, young man! It's your father!"

The diplomatist and his lady gradually edged back: but Rose remained beside the Countess, who breathed quick, and seemed to have lost her self-command.

Thinking he was apprehended, Mr. Goren said: "I'm going down to-night to take care of the shop. He's to be buried in his old uniform. You had better come with me by the night-coach, if you would see the last of him, young man."

Breaking an odd pause that had fallen, the Countess cried aloud, suddenly:

"In his uniform!"

Mr. Goren felt his arm seized and his legs hurrying him some paces into isolation. "Thanks! thanks!" was murmured in his ear. "Not a

word more. Evan cannot bear it. Oh! you are good to have come, and we are grateful. My father! my father!"

She had to tighten her hand and wrist against her bosom to keep herself up. She had to reckon in a glance how much Rose had heard, or divined. She had to mark whether the Count had understood a syllable. She had to whisper to Evan to hasten away with the horrible man. She had to enliven his stunned senses, and calm her own. And with mournful images of her father in her brain, the female Spartan had to turn to Rose, and speculate on the girl's reflective brows, while she said, as over a distant relative, sadly, but without distraction: "A death in the family!" and preserved herself from weeping her heart out, that none might guess the thing who did not positively know it.

Evan touched the hand of Rose without meeting her eyes. He was soon cast off in Mr. Goren's boat. Then the Countess murmured final adieux; twilight under her lids, but yet a smile, stately, affectionate, almost genial. Rose, her sweet Rose, she must kiss. She could have slapped Rose for appearing so reserved and cold. She hugged Rose, as to hug oblivion of the last few minutes into her. The girl leant her cheek, and bore the embrace, looking on her with a kind of wonder.

Only when alone with the Count, in the brewer's carriage awaiting her on shore, did the lady give a natural course to her grief; well knowing that her Silva would attribute it to the darkness of their common exile. She wept: but in the excess of her misery, two words of strangely opposite signification, pronounced by Mr. Goren; two words that were at once poison and antidote, sang in her brain; two words that painted her dead father from head to foot, his nature and his fortune: these were the Shop, and the Uniform.

Oh! what would she not have given to have seen and bestowed on her beloved father one last kiss! Oh! how she hoped that her inspired echo of Uniform, on board the *Jocasta*, had drowned the memory, eclipsed the meaning, of that fatal utterance of Shop!

CHAPTER V.

THE FAMILY AND THE FUNERAL.

IT was the evening of the second day since the arrival of the black letter in London from Lymport, and the wife of the brewer and the wife of the Major sat dropping tears into one another's laps, in expectation of their sister the Countess. Mr. Andrew Cogglesby had not yet returned from his office. The gallant Major had gone forth to dine with General Sir George Freebooter, the head of the Marines of his time. It would have been difficult for the Major, he informed his wife, to send in an excuse to the General for non-attendance, without entering into particulars; and that he should tell the General he could not dine with him, because of the sudden decease of a tailor, was, as he let his wife understand, and requested her to perceive, quite out of the question. So he dressed himself carefully, and though peremptory with his wife concerning his linen, and requiring natural services from her in the button department, and a casual expression of contentment as to his ultimate make-up, he left her that day without any final injunctions to

occupy her mind, and she was at liberty to weep if she pleased, a privilege she did not enjoy undisturbed when he was present; for the warrior hated that weakness, and did not care to hide his contempt for it.

Of the three sisters, the wife of the Major was, oddly enough, the one who was least inveterately solicitous of concealing the fact of her parentage. Reticence, of course, she had to study with the rest; the Major was a walking book of reticence and the observances; he professed, also, in company with herself alone, to have had much trouble in drilling her to mark and properly preserve them. She had no desire to speak of her birth-place. But, for some reason or other, she did not share her hero's rather petulant anxiety to keep the curtain nailed down on that part of her life which preceded her entry into the ranks of the Royal Marines. Some might have thought that those fair large blue eyes of hers wandered now and then in pleasant unambitious walks behind the curtain, and toyed with little flowers of palest memory. Utterly tasteless, totally wanting in discernment, not to say gratitude, the Major could not presume her to be; and yet his wits perceived that her answers and the conduct she shaped in accordance with his repeated protests and long-reaching apprehensions of what he called danger, betrayed acquiescent obedience

more than the connubial sympathy due to him. Danger on the field the Major knew not of; he did not scruple to name the word in relation to his wife. For, as he told her, should he, some day, as in the chapter of accidents might occur, sally into the street a Knight Companion of the Bath and become known to men as Sir Maxwell Strike, it would be decidedly disagreeable for him to be blown upon by a wind from Lymport. Moreover, she was the mother of a son. The Major pointed out to her the duty she owed her offspring. Certainly the protecting ægis of his rank and title would be over the lad, but she might depend upon it any indiscretion of hers would damage him in his future career, the Major assured her. Young Maxwell must be considered.

For all this, the mother and wife, when the black letter found them in the morning at breakfast, had burst into a fit of grief, and faltered that she wept for a father. Mrs. Andrew, to whom the letter was addressed, had simply held the letter to her in a trembling hand. The Major compared their behaviour, with marked encomiums of Mrs. Andrew. Now this lady and her husband were in obverse relative positions. The brewer had no will but his Harriet's. His esteem for her combined the constitutional feelings of an insignificantly-built little man for

a majestic woman, and those of a worthy soul for the wife of his bosom. Possessing, or possessed by her, the good brewer was perfectly happy. She, it might be thought, under these circumstances, would not have minded much his hearing what he might hear. It happened, however, that she was as jealous of the winds of Lymport as the Major himself; as vigilant in debarring them from access to the brewery as now the Countess could have been. We are not dissecting human nature: suffice it, therefore, from a mere glance at the surface, to say that, just as moneyed men are careful of their coin, women who have all the advantages in a conjunction, are miserly in keeping them, and shudder to think that one thing remains hidden, which the world they move in might put down pityingly in favour of their spouse, even though to the little man 'twere naught. She assumed that a revelation would diminish her moral stature; and certainly it would not increase that of her husband. So no good could come of it. Besides, Andrew knew, his whole conduct was a tacit admission, that she had condescended in giving him her hand. The features of their union might not be changed altogether by a revelation, but it would be a shock to her.

Consequently, Harriet tenderly rebuked Caro-

line for her outcry at the breakfast-table; and Caroline, the elder sister, who had not since marriage grown in so free an air, excused herself humbly, and the two were weeping when the Countess joined them and related what she had just undergone.

Hearing of Caroline's misdemeanour, however, Louisa's eyes rolled aloft in a paroxysm of tribulation. It was nothing to Caroline; it was comparatively nothing to Harriet; but the Count knew not Louisa had a father: believed that her parents had long ago been wiped out. And the Count was by nature inquisitive: and if he once cherished a suspicion he was restless; he was pointed in his inquiries: he was pertinacious in following out a clue: there never would be peace with him! And then Louisa cried aloud for her father, her beloved father! Harriet wept silently. Caroline alone expressed regret that she had not set her eyes on him from the day she became a wife.

"How could we, dear?" the Countess pathetically asked, under drowning lids.

"Papa did not wish it," sobbed Mrs. Andrew.

"I never shall forgive myself!" said the wife of the Major, drying her cheeks. Perhaps it was not herself whom she felt she never could forgive.

Ah! the man their father was! Incomparable

Melchisedec! he might well be called. So generous! so lordly! When the rain of tears would subside for a moment, one would relate an anecdote, or childish reminiscence of him, and provoke a more violent outburst.

“Never, among the nobles of any land, never have I seen one like him!” exclaimed the Countess, and immediately requested Harriet to tell her how it would be possible to stop Andrew’s tongue in Silva’s presence.

“At present, you know, my dear, they may talk as much as they like—they can’t understand one another one bit.”

Mrs. Cogglesby comforted her by the assurance that Andrew had received an intimation of her wish for silence everywhere and towards everybody; and that he might be reckoned upon to respect it, without demanding a reason for the restriction. In other days Caroline and Louisa had a little looked down on Harriet’s alliance with a dumpy man—a brewer—and had always sweet Christian compassion for him if his name were mentioned. They seemed now, by their silence, to have a happier estimate of Andrew’s qualities.

While the three sisters sat mingling their sorrows and alarms, their young brother was making his way to the house. As he knocked at the door he heard his name pronounced behind

him, and had no difficulty in recognising the worthy brewer.

“What, Van, my boy! how are you? Quite a foreigner! By jingo, what a hat!”

Mr. Andrew bounced back two or three steps to regard the dusky sombrero.

“How do you do, sir?” said Evan.

“Sir to you!” Mr. Andrew briskly replied. “Don’t they teach you to give your fist in Portugal, eh? I’ll ‘sir’ you. Wait till I’m Sir Andrew, and then ‘sir’ away. ‘Gad! the women’ll be going it then. Sir Malt and Hops, and no mistake! I say, Van, how did you get on with the boys in that hat? Aha! it’s a plucky thing to wear that hat in London! And here’s a cloak! You do speak English still, Van, eh? Quite jolly, eh, my boy?”

Mr. Andrew rubbed his hands to express that state in himself. Suddenly he stopped, blinked queerly at Evan, grew pensive, and said, “Bless my soul! I forgot.”

The door opened, Mr. Andrew took Evan’s arm, murmured a “hush!” and trod gently along the passage to his library.

“We’re safe here,” he said. “There—there’s something the matter up-stairs. The women are upset about something. Harriet—” Mr. Andrew hesitated, and branched off: “You’ve heard we’ve got a new baby?”

Evan congratulated him ; but another inquiry was in Mr. Andrew's aspect, and Evan's calm, sad manner answered it.

"Yes,"—Mr. Andrew shook his head dolefully—"a splendid little chap! a rare little chap! a—we can't help these things, Van! They will happen. Sit down, my boy."

Mr. Andrew again interrogated Evan with his eyes.

"My father is dead," said Evan.

"Yes!" Mr. Andrew nodded, and glanced quickly at the ceiling, as if to make sure that none listened overhead. "My parliamentary duties will soon be over for the season," he added, aloud; pursuing, in an under breath: "Going down to-night, Van?"

"He is to be buried to-morrow," said Evan.

"Then, of course, you go. Yes: quite right. Love your father and mother! always love your father and mother! Old Tom and I never knew ours. Tom's quite well—same as ever. I'll," he rang the bell, "have my chop in here with you. You must try and eat a bit, Van. Here we are, and there we go. Old Tom's wandering for one of his weeks. You'll see him some day, Van. He ain't like me. No dinner to-day, I suppose, Charles?"

This was addressed to the footman. He announced: "Dinner to-day at half-past six, as usual, sir," bowed, and retired.

Mr. Andrew pored on the floor, and rubbed his hair back on his head. "An odd world!" was his remark.

Evan lifted up his face to sigh: "I'm almost sick of it!"

"Damn appearances!" cried Mr. Andrew, jumping on his legs.

The action cooled him.

"I'm sorry I swore," he said. "Bad habit! The Major's here—you know that?" and he assumed the Major's voice, and strutted in imitation of the stalwart marine. "Major—a—Strike! of the Royal Marines! returned from China! covered with glory!—a hero, Van! We can't expect him to be much of a mourner, Van. And we shan't have him to dine with us to-day—that's something." He sunk his voice: "I hope the widow'll bear it."

"I hope to God my mother is well!" Evan groaned.

"That'll do," said Mr. Andrew. "Don't say any more."

As he spoke, he clapped Evan kindly on the back.

A message was brought from the ladies, requiring Evan to wait on them. He returned after some minutes.

"How do you think Harriet's looking?" asked Mr. Andrew. And, not waiting for an answer,

whispered, "Are they going down to the funeral, my boy?"

Evan's brow was dark, as he replied: "They are not decided."

"Won't Harriet go?"

"She is not going—she thinks not."

"And the Countess—Louisa's up-stairs, eh?—will she go?"

"She cannot leave the Count—she thinks not."

"Won't Caroline go. Caroline can go. She—he—I mean—Caroline can go?"

"The Major objects. She wishes to."

Mr. Andrew struck out his arm, and uttered, "the Major!"—a compromise for a loud anathema. But the compromise was vain, for he sinned again in an explosion against appearances.

"I'm a brewer, Van. Do you think I'm ashamed of it? Not while I brew good beer, my boy!—not while I brew good beer! They don't think worse of me in the House for it. It isn't ungentlemanly to brew good beer, Van. But what's the use of talking?"

Mr. Andrew sat down, and murmured, "Poor girl! poor girl!"

The allusion was to his wife; for presently he said: "I can't see why Harriet can't go. What's to prevent her?"

Evan gazed at him steadily. Death's levelling

influence was in Evan's mind. He was ready to say why, and fully.

Mr. Andrew arrested him with a sharp "Never mind! Harriet does as she likes. I'm accustomed to—hem!—what she does is best, after all. She doesn't interfere with my business, nor I with hers. Man and wife."

Pausing a moment or so, Mr. Andrew intimated that they had better be dressing for dinner. With his hand on the door, which he kept closed, he said, in a business-like way, "You know, Van, as for me, I should be very willing—only too happy—to go down and pay all the respect I could." He became confused, and shot his head from side to side, looking anywhere but at Evan. "Happy now and to-morrow, to do anything in *my* power, if Harriet—follow the funeral—one of the family—anything *I* could do: but—a—we'd better be dressing for dinner." And out the enigmatic little man went.

Evan partly divined him then. But at dinner his behaviour was perplexing. He was too cheerful. He pledged the Count. He would have the Portuguese for this and that, and make Anglican efforts to repeat it, and laugh at his failures. He would not see that there was a father dead. At a table of actors, Mr. Andrew overdid his part, and was the worst. His wife could not help thinking him a heartless little man.

The poor show had its term. The ladies fled to the boudoir sacred to grief. Evan was whispered that he was to join them when he might, without seeming mysterious to the Count. Before he reached them, they had talked tearfully over the clothes he should wear at Lymport, agreeing that his present foreign apparel, being black, would be suitable, and would serve almost as disguise, to the inhabitants at large; and as Evan had no English wear, and there was no time to procure any for him, that was well. They arranged exactly how long he should stay at Lymport, whom he should visit, the manner he should adopt towards the different inhabitants. By all means he was to avoid the approach of the gentry. For hours Evan, in a trance, half stupefied, had to listen to the Countess's directions how he was to comport himself in Lymport.

“Show that you have descended among them, dear Van, but are not of them. You have come to pay the last mortal duties, which they will respect, if they are not brutes, and attempt no familiarities. Allow none: gently, but firmly. Imitate Silva. You remember, at Doña Risbonda's ball? When he met the Comte de Dartigues, and knew he was to be in disgrace with his Court on the morrow? Oh! the exquisite shade of difference in Silva's behaviour towards the Comte. So finely, delicately perceptible to the Comte, and

not a soul saw it but that wretched Frenchman! He came to me: "Madame," he said, 'is a question permitted?' I replied, 'As many as you please, M. le Comte, but no answers promised.' He said: 'May I ask if the Courier has yet come in?' 'Nay, M. le Comte,' I replied, 'this is diplomacy. Inquire of me, or better, give me an opinion on the new glacé silk from Paris.' 'Madame,' said he, bowing, 'I hope Paris may send me aught so good, or that I shall grace half so well.' I smiled, 'You shall not be single in your hopes, M. le Comte. The gift would be base that you did not embellish.' He lifted his hands, French-fashion: 'Madame, it is that I have received the gift.' 'Indeed! M. le Comte.' 'Even now from the Count de Saldar, your husband.' I looked most innocently, 'From my husband, M. le Comte?' 'From him, Madame. A portrait. An Ambassador without his coat! The portrait was a finished performance.' I said: 'And may one beg the permission to inspect it?' 'Mais,' said he, laughing: 'were it you alone, it would be a privilege to me.' I had to check him. 'Believe me, M. le Comte, that when *I* look upon it, my praise of the artist will be extinguished by my pity for the subject.' He should have stopped there; but you cannot have the last word with a Frenchman—not even a woman. Fortunately the Queen just then made her entry into the saloon,

and his mot on the charity of our sex was lost. We bowed mutually, and were separated." (The Countess employed her handkerchief.) "Yes, dear Van! that is how you should behave. Imply things. With dearest mamma, of course, you are the dutiful son. Alas! you must stand for son and daughters. Mamma has so much sense! She will understand how sadly we are placed. But in a week I will come to her for a day, and bring you back."

So much his sister Louisa. His sister Harriet offered him her house for a home in London, thence to project his new career. His sister Caroline sought a word with him in private, but only to weep bitterly in his arms, and utter a faint moan of regret at marriages in general. He loved this beautiful creature the best of his three sisters (partly, it may be, because he despised her superior officer), and tried with a few smothered words to induce her to accompany him: but she only shook her fair locks and moaned afresh. Mr. Andrew, in the farewell squeeze of the hand at the street-door, asked him if he wanted anything. Evan knew his brother-in-law meant money. He negatived the requirement of anything whatever, with an air of careless decision, though he was aware that his purse barely contained more than would take him the distance, but the instincts of this amateur gentleman were

very fine and sensitive on questions of money. His family had never known him beg for a farthing, or admit his necessity for a shilling: nor could he be made to accept money unless it was thrust into his pocket. Somehow, his sisters had forgotten this peculiarity of his. Harriet only remembered it when too late.

“But I dare say Andrew has supplied him,” she said.

Andrew being interrogated, informed her what had passed between them.

“And you think a Harrington would confess he wanted money!” was her scornful exclamation. “Evan would walk—he would die rather. It was treating him like a mendicant.”

Andrew had to shrink in his brewer’s skin.

By some fatality all who were doomed to sit and listen to the Countess de Saldar, were sure to be behindhand in an appointment.

When the young man arrived at the coach-office, he was politely informed that the vehicle, in which a seat had been secured for him, was in close alliance with time and tide, and being under the same rigid laws, could not possibly have waited for him, albeit it had stretched a point to the extent of a pair of minutes, at the urgent solicitation of a passenger.

“A gentleman who speaks so, sir,” said a volunteer mimic of the office, crowing and

questioning from his throat in Goren's manner. "Yok! yok! That was how he spoke, sir."

Evan reddened, for it brought the scene on board the *Jocasta* vividly to his mind. The heavier business obliterated it. He took counsel with the clerks of the office, and eventually the volunteer mimic conducted him to certain livery stables, where Evan, like one accustomed to command, ordered a chariot to pursue the coach, received a touch of the hat for a lordly fee, and was soon rolling out of London.

CHAPTER VI.

MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD.

THE postillion had every reason to believe that he carried a real gentleman behind him; in other words, a purse long and liberal. He judged by all the points he knew of: a firm voice, a brief commanding style, an apparent indifference to expense, and the inexplicable minor characteristics, such as polished boots, and a striking wristband, and so forth, which show a creature accustomed to step over the heads of men. He had, therefore, no particular anxiety to part company, and jogged easily on the white highway, beneath a moon that walked high and small over marble cloud.

Evan reclined in the chariot, revolving his sensations. In another mood he would have called them thoughts, perhaps, and marvelled at their immensity. The theme was Love and Death. One might have supposed, from his occasional mutterings at the pace regulated by the postillion, that he was burning with anxiety to catch the flying coach. He had forgotten it: forgotten that he was giving chase to anything. A pair of

wondering feminine eyes pursued him, and made him fret for the miles to throw a thicker veil between him and them. The serious level brows of Rose haunted the poor youth; and reflecting whither he was tending, and to what sight, he had shadowy touches of the holiness there is in death; from which came a conflict between the imaged phantoms of his father and of Rose, and he sided against his love with some bitterness. His sisters, weeping for their father and holding aloof from his ashes, Evan swept from his mind. He called up the man his father was: the kindness, the readiness, the gallant gaiety of the great Mel. Youths are fascinated by the barbarian virtues; and to Evan, under present influences, his father was a pattern of manhood. He asked himself: Was it infamous to earn one's bread? and answered it very strongly in his father's favour. The great Mel's creditors were not by to show him another feature of the case.

Hitherto, in passive obedience to the indoctrination of the Countess, Evan had looked on tailors as the proscribed race of modern society. He had pitied his father as a man superior to his fate; but despite the fitfully honest promptings with Rose (tempting to him because of the wondrous chivalry they argued, and at bottom false probably as the hypocrisy they affected to combat), he had been by no means sorry that the world saw

not the spot on himself. Other sensations beset him now. Since such a man was banned by the world, which was to be despised?

The clear result of Evan's solitary musing was to cast a sort of halo over Tailordom. Death stood over the pale dead man, his father, and dared the world to sneer at him. By a singular caprice of fancy, Evan had no sooner grasped this image, than it was suggested that he might as well inspect his purse, and see how much money he was master of.

Are you impatient with this young man? He has little character for the moment. Most youths are like Pope's women; they have no character at all. And indeed a character that does not wait for circumstances to shape it, is of small worth in the race that must be run. To be set too early, is to take the work out of the hands of the Sculptor who fashions men. Happily a youth is always at school, and if he was shut up and without mark two or three hours ago, he will have something to show you now: as I have seen blooming sea-flowers and other graduated organisms, when left undisturbed to their own action. Where the Fates have designed that he shall present his figure in a story, this is sure to happen.

To the postillion Evan was indebted for one of his first lessons.

About an hour after midnight pastoral stillness

and the moon begat in the postillion desire for a pipe. Daylight prohibits the dream of it to mounted postillions. At night the question is more human, and allows appeal. The moon smiles assentingly, and smokers know that she really lends herself to the enjoyment of tobacco. The postillion could remember gentlemen who did not object: who had even given him cigars. Turning round to see if haply the present inmate of the chariot might be smoking, he observed a head extended from the window.

“How far are we?” was inquired.

The postillion numbered the milestones passed.

“Do you see anything of the coach?”

“Can’t say as I do, sir.”

He was commanded to stop. Evan jumped out.

“I don’t think I’ll take you any farther,” he said.

The postillion laughed to scorn the notion of his caring how far he went. With a pipe in his mouth, he insinuatingly remarked he could jog on all night, and throw sleep to the dogs. Fresh horses at Hillford; fresh at Fallowfield: and the gentleman himself would reach Lymport fresh in the morning.

“No, no; I won’t take you any farther,” Evan repeated.

“But what do it matter, sir?” urged the postillion.

“I’d rather go on as I am. I—a—made no arrangement to take you the whole way.”

“Oh!” cried the postillion, “don’t you go troublin’ yourself about that, sir. Master knows it’s touch-and-go about catchin’ the coach. I’m all right.”

So infatuated was the fellow in the belief that he was dealing with a perfect gentleman,—an easy pocket!

Now you would not suppose that one who presumes he has sufficient, would find a difficulty in asking how much he has to pay. With an effort, indifferently masked, Evan blurted: “By the way, tell me—how much—what is the charge for the distance we’ve come?”

There are gentlemen-screws: there are conscientious gentlemen. They calculate, and remonstrating or not, they pay. The postillion would rather have had to do with the gentleman royal, who is above base computation; but he knew the humanity in the class he served, and with his conception of Evan, only partially dimmed, he remarked:

“Oh-h-h! that won’t hurt you, sir. Jump along in,—settle that by-and-by.”

But when my gentleman stood fast, and renewed the demand to know the exact charge for the distance already traversed, the postillion dismounted, glanced him over, and speculated with his fingers

tipping up his hat. Meantime Evan drew out his purse, a long one, certainly, but limp. Out of this drowned-looking wretch the last spark of life was taken by the sum the postillion ventured to name; and if paying your utmost farthing without examination of the charge, and cheerfully stepping out to walk fifty miles, penniless, constituted a postillion's gentleman, Evan would have passed the test. The sight of poverty, however, provokes familiar feelings in poor men, if you have not had occasion to show them you possess particular qualities. The postillion's eye was more on the purse than on the sum it surrendered.

"There," said Evan, "I shall walk. Good night." And he flung his cloak to step forward.

"Stop a bit, sir!" arrested him.

The postillion rallied up sideways, with an assumption of genial respect. "I didn't calc'late myself in that there amount."

Were these words, think you, of a character to strike a young man hard on the breast, send the blood to his head, and set up in his heart a derisive chorus? My gentleman could pay his money, and keep his footing gallantly; but to be asked for a penny beyond what he possessed; to be seen beggared, and to be claimed a debtor—alack! Pride was the one developed faculty of Evan's nature. The Fates who mould us, always work from the main-spring. I will not say that the

postillion stripped off the mask for him, at that instant completely; but he gave him the first true glimpse of his condition. From the vague sense of being an impostor, Evan awoke to the clear fact that he was likewise a fool.

It was impossible for him to deny the man's claim, and he would not have done it, if he could. Acceding tacitly, he squeezed the ends of his purse in his pocket, and with a "Let me see," tried his waistcoat. Not too impetuously; for he was careful of betraying the horrid emptiness till he was certain that the powers who wait on gentlemen had utterly forsaken him. They had not. He discovered a small coin, under ordinary circumstances not contemptible; but he did not stay to reflect, and was guilty of the error of offering it to the postillion.

The latter peered at it in the centre of his palm; gazed queerly in the gentleman's face, and then lifting the spit of silver for the disdain of his mistress, the moon, he drew a long breath of regret at the original mistake he had committed, and said:

"That's what you're goin' to give me for my night's work?"

The powers who wait on gentlemen had only helped the pretending youth to try him. A rejection of the demand would have been infinitely wiser and better than this paltry compromise.

The postillion would have fought it: he would not have despised his fare.

How much it cost the poor pretender to reply, "It's the last farthing I have, my man," the postillion could not know.

"A scabby sixpence?" The postillion continued his question.

"You heard what I said," Evan remarked.

The postillion drew another deep breath, and holding out the coin at arm's length:

"Well, sir!" he observed, as one whom mental conflict has brought to the philosophy of the case, "now was we to change places, I couldn't 'a done it! I couldn't 'a done it!" he reiterated, pausing emphatically.

"Take it, sir!" he magnanimously resumed; "take it! You rides when you can, and you walks when you must. Lord forbid I should rob such a gentleman as you!"

One who feels a death, is for the hour lifted above the satire of postillions. A good genius prompted Evan to avoid the silly squabble that might have ensued and made him ridiculous. He took the money, quietly saying, "Thank you."

Not to lose his vantage, the postillion, though a little staggered by the move, rejoined: "Don't mention it."

Evan then said: "Good night, my man. I won't wish, for your sake, that we changed places.

You would have to walk fifty miles to be in time for your father's funeral. Good night."

"You are it—to look at!" was the postillion's comment, seeing my gentleman depart with great strides. He did not speak offensively; rather it seemed, to appease his conscience for the original mistake he had committed, for subsequently came, "My oath on it, I don't get took in again by a squash hat in a hurry!"

Unaware of the ban he had, by a sixpenny stamp, put upon an unoffending class, Evan went a-head, hearing the wheels of the chariot still dragging the road in his rear. The postillion was in a dissatisfied state of mind. He had asked and received more than his due. But in the matter of his sweet self, he had been choused, as he termed it. And my gentleman had baffled him, he could not quite tell how; but he had been got the better of; his sarcasms had not stuck, and returned to rankle in the bosom of their author. As a Jew, therefore, may eye an erewhile bondsman who has paid the bill, but stands out against excess of interest on legal grounds, the postillion regarded Evan, of whom he was now abreast, eager for a controversy.

"Fine night," said the postillion, to begin, and was answered by a short assent. "Lateish for a poor man to be out—don't you think, sir, eh?"

"I ought to think so," said Evan, mastering

the shrewd unpleasantness he felt in the colloquy forced on him.

“Oh, you! you’re a gentleman!” the postillion ejaculated.

“You see I have no money.”

“Feel it, too, sir.”

“I am sorry you should be the victim.”

“Victim!” the postillion seized on an objectionable word. “I ain’t no victim, unless you was up to a joke with me, sir, just now. Was that the game?”

Even informed him that he never played jokes with money, or on men.

“’Cause it looks like it, sir, to go to offer a poor chap sixpence.” The postillion laughed hollow from the end of his lungs. “Sixpence for a night’s work! It *is* a joke, if you don’t mean it for one. Why, do you know, sir, I could go—there, I don’t care where it is!—I could go before any magistrate livin’, and he’d make ye pay. It’s a charge, as custom is, and he’d make ye pay. Or p’rhaps you’re a goin’ on my generosity, and ’ll say, he gev’ back that sixpence! Well! I shouldn’t ’a thought a gentleman ’d make that his defence before a magistrate. But there, my man! if it makes ye happy, keep it. But you take my advice, sir. When you hires a chariot, see you’ve got the shiners. And don’t you go never again offerin’ a sixpence to a poor man for

a night's work. They don't like it. It hurts their feelin's. Don't you forget that, sir. Lay that up in your mind."

Now the postillion having thus relieved himself, jeeringly asked permission to smoke a pipe. To which Evan said, "Pray smoke, if it pleases you." And the postillion, hardly mollified, added "The baccy's paid for," and smoked.

As will sometimes happen, the feelings of the man who had spoken out and behaved doubtfully, grew gentle and Christian, whereas those of the man whose bearing under the trial had been irreproachable were much the reverse. The postillion smoked—he was a lord on his horse; he beheld my gentleman trudging in the dust. Awhile he enjoyed the contrast, dividing his attention between the footfarer and moon. To have had the last word is always a great thing; and to have given my gentleman a lecture, because he shunned a dispute, also counts. And then there was the poor young fellow trudging to his father's funeral! The postillion chose to remember that now. In reality, he allowed, he had not very much to complain of, and my gentleman's courteous avoidance of provocation (the apparent fact that he, the postillion, had humbled him and got the better of him, equally, it may be), acted on his fine English spirit. I should not like to leave out the tobacco in this good change that was wrought

in him. However, he presently astonished Evan by pulling up his horses, and crying that he was on his way to Hillford to bait, and saw no reason why he should not take a lift that part of the road, at all events. Evan thanked him briefly, but declined, and paced on with his head bent.

“It won’t cost you nothing—not a sixpence!” the postillion sang out, pursuing him. “Come, sir! be a man! I ain’t a hintin’ at anything—jump in.”

Evan again declined, and looked out for a side path to escape the fellow, whose bounty was worse to him than his abuse, and whose mention of the sixpence was unlucky.

“Dash it!” cried the postillion, “you’re going down to a funeral—I think you said your father’s, sir—you may as well try and get there respectable—as far as *I* go. It’s one to me whether you’re in or out; the horses won’t feel it, and I do wish you’d take a lift and welcome. It’s because you’re too much of a gentleman to be beholden to a poor man, I suppose!”

Evan’s young pride may have had a little of that base mixture in it, and certainly he would have preferred that the invitation had not been made to him; but he was capable of appreciating what the rejection of a piece of friendliness involved, and as he saw that the man was sincere, he did violence to himself, and said: “Very well; then I’ll jump in.”

The postillion was off his horse in a twinkling, and trotted his bandy legs to undo the door, as to a gentleman who paid. This act of service Evan valued.

“Suppose I were to ask you to take the sixpence now?” he said, turning round, with one foot on the step.

“Well, sir,” the postillion sent his hat aside to answer. “I don’t want it—I’d rather not have it; but there! I’ll take it—dash the sixpence! and we’ll cry quits.”

Evan, surprised and pleased with him, dropped the bit of money in his hand, saying: “It will fill a pipe for you. While you’re smoking it, think of me as in your debt. You’re the only man I ever owed a penny to.”

The postillion put it in a side pocket apart, and observed: “A sixpence kindly meant is worth any crown-piece that’s grudged—that it is! In you jump, sir. It’s a jolly night!”

Thus may one, not a conscious sage, play the right tune on this human nature of ours: by forbearance, put it in the wrong; and then, by not refusing the burden of an obligation, confer something better. The instrument is simpler than we are taught to fancy. But it was doubtless owing to a strong emotion in his soul, as well as to the stuff he was made of, that the youth behaved as he did. We are now and then above our own

actions; seldom on a level with them. Evan, I dare say, was long in learning to draw any gratification from the fact that he had achieved without money the unparalleled conquest of a man. Perhaps he never knew what immediate influence on his fortune this episode effected.

At Hillford they went their different ways. The postillion wished him good speed, and Evan shook his hand. He did so rather abruptly, for the postillion was fumbling at his pocket, and evidently rounding about a proposal in his mind.

My gentleman has now the road to himself. Money is the clothing of a gentleman: he may wear it well or ill. Some, you will mark, carry great quantities of it gracefully: some, with a stinted supply, present a decent appearance: very few, I imagine, will bear inspection, who are absolutely stripped of it. All, save the shameless, are toiling to escape that trial. My gentleman, treading the white highway across the solitary heaths, that swell far and wide to the moon, is, by the postillion, who has seen him, pronounced no sham. Nor do I think the opinion of any man worthless, who has had the postillion's authority for speaking. But it is, I am told, a finer test to embellish much gentleman-apparel, than to walk with dignity totally unadorned. This simply tries the soundness of our faculties: that tempts them

in erratic directions. It is the difference between active and passive excellence.

As there is hardly any situation, however, so interesting to reflect upon as that of a man without a penny in his pocket, and a gizzard full of pride, we will leave Mr. Evan Harrington to what fresh adventures may befall him, walking towards the funeral plumes of the firs, under the soft midsummer flush, westward, where his father lies.

CHAPTER VII.

MOTHER AND SON.

RARE as epic song is the man who is thorough in what he does. And happily so ; for in life he subjugates us, and makes us bondsmen to his ashes. It was in the order of things that the great Mel should be borne to his final resting-place by a troop of creditors. You have seen (since the occasion demands a pompous simile) clouds that all day cling about the sun, and, in seeking to obscure him, are compelled to blaze in his livery : at fall of night they break from him illumined, hang mournfully above him, and wear his natural glories long after he is gone. Thus, then, these worthy fellows, faithful to him to the dust, fulfilled Mel's triumphant passage amongst them, and closed his career.

To regale them when they returned, Mrs. Mel, whose mind was not intent on greatness, was occupied in spreading meat and wine. Mrs. Fiske assisted her, as well as she could, seeing that one hand was entirely engaged by her handkerchief. She had already stumbled, and dropped a glass, which had brought on her sharp condem-

nation from her aunt, who bade her sit down, or go up-stairs to have her cry out, and then return to be serviceable.

“ Oh! I can't help it!” sobbed Mrs. Fiske. “ That he should be carried away, and none of his children to see him the last time! I can understand Louisa — and Harriet, too, perhaps! But why could not Caroline? And that they should be too fine ladies to let their brother come and bury his father. Oh! it does seem——”

Mrs. Fiske fell into a chair, and surrendered to grief.

“ Where is the cold tongue?” said Mrs. Mel to Sally, the maid, in a brief under-voice.

“ Please mum, Jacko——!”

“ He must be whipped. You are a careless slut.”

“ Please, I can't think of everybody and everything, and poor master——”

Sally plumped on a seat, and took sanctuary under her apron. Mrs. Mel glanced at the pair, continuing her labour.

“ Oh, aunt, aunt!” cried Mrs. Fiske, “ why *didn't* you put it off for another day, to give Evan a chance?”

“ Master'd have kept another *two* days, he would!” whimpered Sally.

“ Oh, aunt! to think!” cried Mrs. Fiske.

“ And his coffin not bearin' of his spurs!” whimpered Sally.

Mrs. Mel interrupted them by commanding Sally to go to the drawing-room, and ask a lady there, of the name of Mrs. Wishaw, whether she would like to have some lunch sent up to her. Mrs. Fiske was requested to put towels in Evan's bedroom.

"Yes, aunt, if you're not infatuated!" said Mrs. Fiske, as she prepared to obey, while Sally, seeing that her public exhibition of sorrow and sympathy could be indulged but an instant longer, unwound herself for a violent paroxysm, blurting between stops :

"If he'd ony've gone to his last bed comfortable! . . . If he'd ony've been that decent as not for to go to his last bed with his clothes on! . . . If he'd ony've had a comfortable sheet! . . . It makes a woman feel cold to think of him full dressed there, as if he was goin' to be a soldier on the Day o' Judgment!"

To let people speak was a maxim of Mrs. Mel's, and a wise one for any form of society when emotions are very much on the surface. She continued her arrangements quietly, and, having counted the number of plates and glasses, and told off the guests on her fingers, she sat down to await them.

The first who entered the room was her son.

"You have come," said Mrs. Mel, flushing slightly, but otherwise outwardly calm.

“You didn’t suppose I should stay away from you, mother?”

Evan kissed her cheek.

“I knew you would not.”

Mrs. Mel examined him with those eyes of hers that compassed objects in a single glance. She drew her finger on each side of her upper lip, and half smiled, saying:

“That won’t do here.”

“What?” asked Evan, and proceeded immediately to make inquiries about her health, which she satisfied with a nod.

“You saw him lowered, Van?”

“Yes, mother.”

“Then go and wash yourself, for you are dirty, and then come and take your place at the head of the table.”

“Must I sit here, mother?”

“Without a doubt you must, Van. You know your room. Quick!”

In this manner their first interview passed.

Mrs. Fiske rushed in to exclaim:

“So, you were right, aunt—he has come. I met him on the stairs. Oh! how like dear uncle Mel he looks, in the militia, with that moustache. I just remember him as a child; and, oh, *what* a gentleman he is!”

At the end of the sentence Mrs. Mel’s face suddenly darkened: she said in a deep voice:

“Don't dare to talk that nonsense before him, Ann.”

Mrs. Fiske looked astonished.

“What have I done, aunt?”

“*He* shan't be ruined by a parcel of fools,” said Mrs. Mel. “There, go! Women have no place here.”

“How the wretches can force themselves to touch a morsel, after this morning!” Mrs. Fiske exclaimed, glancing at the table.

“Men must eat,” said Mrs. Mel.

The mourners were heard gathering outside the door. Mrs. Fiske escaped into the kitchen. Mrs. Mel admitted them into the parlour, bowing much above the level of many of the heads that passed her.

Assembled were Messrs. Barnes, Kilne, and Grossby, whom we know; Mr. Doubleday, the ironmonger; Mr. Joyce, the grocer; Mr. Perkins, commonly called Lawyer Perkins; Mr. Welbeck, the pier-master of Lymport; Bartholomew Fiske; Mr. Coxwell, a Fallowfield maltster, brewer, and farmer; creditors of various dimensions all of them. Mr. Goren coming last, behind his spectacles.

“My son will be with you directly, to preside,” said Mrs. Mel. “Accept my thanks for the respect you have shown my husband. I wish you good morning.”

“Morning, ma'am,” answered several voices, and Mrs. Mel retired.

The mourners then set to work to relieve their hats of the appendages of crape. An undertaker's man took possession of the long black cloaks. The gloves were generally pocketed.

"That's my second black pair this year," said Joyce. "They'll last a time to come. I don't need to buy gloves while neighbours pop off."

"Undertakers' gloves seem to me as if they're made for mutton fists," remarked Welbeck; upon which Kilne nudged Barnes, the butcher, with a sharp "Aha!" and Barnes observed:

"Oh! I never wear 'em—they does for my boys on Sundays. I smoke a pipe at home."

The Fallowfield farmer held his length of crape aloft and inquired: "What shall do with this?"

"Oh, you keep it," said one or two.

Coxwell rubbed his chin. "Don't like to rob the wider."

"What's left goes to the undertaker?" asked Grossby.

"To be sure," said Barnes; and Kilne added: "It's a job:" Lawyer Perkins ejaculating confidently, "Perquisites of office, gentlemen; perquisites of office!" which settled the dispute and appeased every conscience.

A survey of the table ensued. The mourners felt hunger, or else thirst; but had not, it appeared, amalgamated the two appetites as yet. Thirst was the predominant declaration; and

Grossby, after an examination of the decanters, unctuously deduced the fact, which he announced, that port and sherry were present.

“Try the port,” said Kilne.

“Good?” Barnes inquired.

A very intelligent “I ought to know,” with a reserve of regret at the extension of his intimacy with the particular vintage under that roof, was winked by Kilne.

Lawyer Perkins touched the arm of a mourner about to be experimental on Kilne’s port:

“I think we had better wait till young Mr. Harrington takes the table, don’t you see?”

“Yes,—ah!” croaked Goren. “The head of the family, as the saying goes!”

“I suppose we shan’t go into business to-day?” Joyce carelessly observed.

Lawyer Perkins answered:

“No. You can’t expect it. Mr. Harrington has led me to anticipate that he will appoint a day. Don’t you see?”

“Oh! I see,” returned Joyce. “I ain’t in such a hurry. What’s he doing?”

Doubleday, whose propensities were waggish, suggested “shaving,” but half ashamed of it, since the joke missed, fell to as if he were soaping his face, and had some trouble to contract his jaw.

The delay in Evan’s attendance on the guests

of the house was caused by the fact that Mrs. Mel had lain in wait for him descending, to warn him that he must treat them with no supercilious civility, and to tell him partly the reason why. On hearing the potential relations in which they stood towards the estate of his father, Evan hastily and with the assurance of a son of fortune, said they should be paid.

“That’s what they would like to hear,” said Mrs. Mel. “You may just mention it when they’re going to leave. Say you will fix a day to meet them.”

“Every farthing!” pursued Evan, on whom the tidings were beginning to operate. “What! debts? my poor father!”

“And a thumping sum, Van. You will open your eyes wider.”

“But it shall be paid, mother,—it shall be paid. Debts? I hate them. I’d slave night and day to pay them.”

Mrs. Mel spoke in a more positive tense: “And so will I, Van. Now, go.”

It mattered little to her what sort of effect on his demeanour her revelation produced, so long as the resolve she sought to bring him to was nailed in his mind; and she was a woman to knock and knock again, till it was firmly fixed there. With a strong purpose, and no plans, there were few who could resist what, in her circle, she willed;

not even a youth who would gaily have marched to the scaffold rather than stand behind a counter. A purpose wedded to plans may easily suffer shipwreck; but an unfettered purpose that moulds circumstances as they arise, masters us, and is terrible. Character melts to it, like metal in the steady furnace. The projector of plots is but a miserable gambler and votary of chances. Of a far higher quality is the will that can subdue itself to wait, and lay no petty traps for opportunity. Poets may fable of such a will, that it makes the very heavens conform to it; or, I may add, what is almost equal thereto, one who would be a gentleman, to consent to be a tailor. The only person who ever held in his course against Mrs. Mel, was Mel,—her husband; but, with him, she was under the physical fascination of her youth, and it never left her. In her heart she barely blamed him. What *he* did, she took among other inevitable matters.

The door closed upon Evan, and waiting at the foot of the stairs a minute to hear how he was received, Mrs. Mel went to the kitchen and called the name of Dandy, which brought out an ill-built, low-browed, small man, in a baggy suit of black, who hopped up to her with a surly salute. Dandy was a bird Mrs. Mel had herself brought down, and she had for him something of a sportsman's regard for his victim. Dandy was the

cleaner of boots and runner of errands in the household of Melchisedec, having originally entered it on a dark night by the cellar. Mrs. Mel, on that occasion, was sleeping in her dressing-gown, to be ready to give the gallant night-hawk, her husband, the service he might require on his return to the nest. Hearing a suspicious noise below, she rose, and deliberately loaded a pair of horse-pistols, weapons Mel had worn in his holsters in the heroic days gone; and with these she stepped down-stairs straight to the cellar, carrying a lantern at her girdle. She could not only load, but present and fire. Dandy was foremost in stating that she called him forth steadily, three times, before the pistol was discharged. He admitted that he was frightened, and incapable of speech, at the apparition of the tall, terrific woman. After the third time of asking he had the ball lodged in his leg and fell. Mrs. Mel was in the habit of bearing heavier weights than Dandy. She made no ado about lugging him to a chamber, where, with her own hands (for this woman had some slight knowledge of surgery, and was great in herbs and drugs) she dressed his wound, and put him to bed; crying contempt (ever present in Dandy's memory) at such a poor creature undertaking the work of housebreaker. Taught that he really was a poor creature for the work, Dandy, his nursing over,

begged to be allowed to stop and wait on Mrs. Mel; and she who had, like many strong natures, a share of pity for the objects she despised, did not cast him out. A jerk in his gait, owing to the bit of lead Mrs. Mel had dropped into him, and a little, perhaps, to her self-satisfied essay in surgical science on his person, earned him the name he went by.

When her neighbours remonstrated with her for housing a reprobate, Mrs. Mel would say: "Dandy is well-fed and well-physicked: there's no harm in Dandy;" by which she may have meant that the food won his gratitude, and the physic reduced his humours. She had observed human nature. At any rate, Dandy was her creature; and the great Mel himself rallied her about her squire.

"When were you drunk last?" was Mrs. Mel's address to Dandy, as he stood waiting for orders.

He replied to it in an altogether injured way:

"There, now; you've been and called me away from my dinner to ask me that. Why, when I had the last chance, to be sure."

"And you were at dinner in your new black suit?"

"Well," growled Dandy, "I borrowed Sally's apron. Seems I can't please ye."

Mrs. Mel neither enjoined nor cared for outward forms of respect, where she was sure of

complete subserviency. If Dandy went beyond the limits, she gave him an extra dose. Up to the limits he might talk as he pleased, in accordance with Mrs. Mel's maxim, that it was a necessary relief to all talking creatures.

"Now, take off your apron," she said, "and wash your hands, dirty pig, and go and wait at table in there;" she pointed to the parlour-door. "Come straight to me when everybody has left."

"Well, there I am with the bottles again," returned Dandy. "It's your fault this time, mind! I'll come as straight as I can."

Dandy turned away to perform her bidding, and Mrs. Mel ascended to the drawing-room to sit with Mrs. Wishaw, who was, as she told all who chose to hear, an old flame of Mel's, and was besides, what Mrs. Mel thought more of, the wife of Mel's principal creditor, a wholesale dealer in cloth, resident in London.

The conviviality of the mourners did not disturb the house. Still, men who are not accustomed to see the colour of wine every day, will sit and enjoy it, even upon solemn occasions, and the longer they sit the more they forget the matter that has brought them together. Pleading their wives and shops, however, they released Evan from his miserable office late in the afternoon. His mother came down to him, and saying, "I

see how you did the journey—you walked it," told him to follow her.

"Yes, mother," Evan yawned, "I walked part of the way. I met a fellow in a gig about ten miles out of Fallowfield, and he gave me a lift to Flatsham. I just reached Lymport in time, thank Heaven! I wouldn't have missed that! By the way, I've satisfied these men."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Mel.

"They wanted—one or two of them—what a penance it is to have to sit among those people an hour!—they wanted to ask me about the business, but I silenced them. I told them to meet me here this day week."

Mrs. Mel again went "Oh!" and, pushing into one of the upper rooms, said, "Here's your bedroom, Van, just as you left it."

"Ah, so it is," muttered Evan, eyeing a print. "The Douglas and the Percy: 'he took the dead man by the hand.' What an age it seems since I last saw that. There's Sir Hugh Montgomery on horseback—he hasn't moved. Don't you remember my father calling it the Battle of Tit-for-Tat? Gallant Percy! I know he wished he had lived in those days of knights and battles."

"It does not much signify whom one has to make clothes for," observed Mrs. Mel. Her son happily did not mark her.

"I think we neither of us were made for the

days of pence and pounds," he continued. "Now, mother, sit down, and talk to me about him. Did he mention me? Did he give me his blessing? I hope he did not suffer. I'd have given anything to press his hand," and looking wistfully at the Percy lifting the hand of Douglas dead, Evan's eyes filled with big tears.

"He suffered very little," returned Mrs. Mel, "and his last words were about you."

"What were they?" Evan burst out.

"I will tell you another time. Now undress, and go to bed. When I talk to you, Van, I want a cool head to listen. You do nothing but yawn yard-measures."

The mouth of the weary youth instinctively snapped short the abhorred emblem.

"Here, I will help you, Van."

In spite of his remonstrances and petitions for talk, she took off his coat and waistcoat, contemptuously criticising the cloth of foreign tailors and their absurd cut.

"Have you heard from Louisa?" asked Evan.

"Yes, yes—about your sisters by-and-by. Now, be good, and go to bed."

She still treated him like a boy, whom she was going to force to the resolution of a man.

Dandy's sleeping-room was on the same floor as Evan's. Thither, when she had quitted her son, she directed her steps. She had heard

Dandy tumble up-stairs the moment his duties were over, and knew what to expect when the bottles had been in his way; for drink made Dandy savage, and a terror to himself. It was her command to him that, when he happened to come across liquor, he should immediately seek his bedroom and bolt the door, and Dandy had got the habit of obeying her. On this occasion he was vindictive against her, seeing that she had delivered him over to his enemy with malice prepense. A good deal of knocking, and summoning of Dandy by name, was required before she was admitted, and the sight of her did not delight him, as he testified.

“I’m drunk!” he bawled. “Will that do for ye?”

Mrs. Mel stood with her two hands crossed above her apron-string, noting his sullen lurking eye with the calm of a tamer of beasts.

“You go out of the room; I’m drunk!” Dandy repeated, and pitched forward on the bed-post, in the middle of an oath.

She understood that it was pure kindness on Dandy’s part to bid her go and be out of his reach; and therefore, on his becoming so abusive as to be menacing, she, without a shade of anger, and in the most unruffled manner, administered to him the remedy she had reserved, in the shape of a smart box on the ears, which sent him flat to

the floor. He rose, after two or three efforts, quite subdued.

“Now, Dandy, sit on the edge of the bed.”

Dandy sat on the extreme edge, and Mrs. Mel pursued: “Now, Dandy, tell me what your master said at the table.”

“Talked at ’em like a lord, he did,” said Dandy, stupidly consoling the boxed ear.

“What were his words?”

Dandy’s peculiarity was, that he never remembered anything save when drunk, and Mrs. Mel’s dose had rather sobered him. By degrees, scratching at his head haltingly, he gave the context.

“Gentlemen, I hear for the first time, you’ve claims against my poor father. Nobody shall ever say he died, and any man was the worse for it. I’ll meet you next week, and I’ll bind myself by *law*. Here’s Lawyer Perkins. No; Mr. Perkins. I’ll pay off every penny. Gentlemen, look upon me as your debtor, and not my father.’”

Delivering this with tolerable steadiness, Dandy asked, “Will that do?”

“That will do,” said Mrs. Mel. “I’ll send you up some tea presently. Lie down, Dandy.”

The house was dark and silent when Evan, refreshed by his rest, descended to seek his mother. She was sitting alone in the parlour. With a tenderness which Mrs. Mel permitted

rather than encouraged, Evan put his arm round her neck, and kissed her many times. One of the symptoms of heavy sorrow, a longing for the signs of love, made Evan fondle his mother, and bend over her yearningly. Mrs. Mel said once: "Dear Van; good boy!" and quietly sat through his caresses.

"Sitting up for me, mother?" he whispered.

"Yes, Van; we may as well have our talk out."

"Ah!" he took a chair close by her side, "tell me my father's last words."

"He said he hoped you would never be a tailor."

Evan's forehead wrinkled up. "There's not much fear of that, then!"

His mother turned her face on him, and examined him with a rigorous placidity; all her features seeming to bear down on him. Evan did not like the look.

"You object to trade, Van?"

"Yes, decidedly, mother—hate it; but that's not what I want to talk to you about. Didn't my father speak of me much?"

"He desired that you should wear his Militia sword, if you got a commission."

"I have rather given up the army," said Evan.

Mrs. Mel requested him to tell her what a colonel's full pay amounted to; and again, the

number of years it required, on a rough calculation, to attain that grade. In reply to his statement, she observed: "A tailor might realise twice the sum in a quarter of the time."

"What if he does—double, or treble?" cried Evan, impetuously; and to avoid the theme, and cast off the bad impression it produced on him, he rubbed his hands, and said: "I want to talk to you about my prospects, mother."

"What are they?" Mrs. Mell inquired.

The severity of her mien and sceptical coldness of her speech caused him to inspect them suddenly, as if she had lent him her eyes. He put them by, till the gold should recover its natural shine, saying: "By the way, mother, I've written the half of a History of Portugal."

"Have you?" said Mrs. Mel. "For Louisa?"

"No, mother, of course not: to sell it. Albuquerque! what a splendid fellow he was!"

Informing him that he knew she abominated foreign names, she said: "And your prospects are, writing Histories of Portugal?"

"No, mother. I was going to tell you, I expect a Government appointment. Mr. Jocelyn likes my work—I think he likes me. You know, I was his private secretary for ten months."

"You write a good hand," his mother interposed.

"And I'm certain I was born for diplomacy."

“ For an easy chair, and an ink-dish before you, and lacqueys behind. What’s to be your income, Van? ”

Evan carelessly remarked that he must wait and see.

“ A very proper thing to do,” said Mrs. Mel ; for now that she had fixed him to some explanation of his prospects, she could condescend, in her stiff way, to banter.

Slightly touched by it, Evan pursued, half-laughing, as men do who wish to propitiate common sense on behalf of what seems tolerably absurd : “ It’s not the immediate income, you know, mother : one thinks of one’s future. In the diplomatic service, as Louisa says, you come to be known to Ministers—gradually, I mean. That is, they hear of you ; and if you show you have some capacity——Louisa wants me to throw it up in time, and stand for Parliament. Andrew, she thinks, would be glad to help me to his seat. Once in Parliament, and known to Ministers, you—your career is open to you.”

In justice to Mr. Evan Harrington, it must be said, he built up this extraordinary card-castle to dazzle his mother’s mind : he had lost his right grasp of her character for the moment, because of an undefined suspicion of something she intended, and which sent him himself to take refuge in those flimsy structures ; while the very altitude

he reached beguiled his imagination, and made him hope to impress hers.

Mrs. Mel dealt it one fillip. "And in the meantime how are you to live, and pay the creditors?"

Though Evan answered cheerfully, "Oh, they will wait, and I can live on anything," he was nevertheless floundering on the ground amid the ruins of the superb edifice; and his mother, upright and rigid, continuing, "You can live on anything, and they will wait, and call your father a rogue," he started, grievously bitten by one of the serpents of earth.

"Good Heaven, mother! what are you saying?"

"That they will call your father a rogue, and will have a right to," said the relentless woman.

"Not while I live!" Evan exclaimed.

"You may stop one mouth with your fist, but you won't stop a dozen, Van."

Evan jumped up and walked the room.

"What am I to do?" he cried. "I will pay everything. I will bind myself to pay every farthing. What more can I possibly do?"

"Make the money," said Mrs. Mel's deep voice.

Evan faced her: "My dear mother, you are very unjust and inconsiderate. I have been working and doing my best. I promise——what do the debts amount to?"

"Something like £5,000 in all, Van."

“Very well.” Youth is not alarmed by the sound of big sums. “Very well—I will pay it.”

Evan looked as proud as if he had just clapped down the full amount on the table.

“Out of the History of Portugal, half written, and the prospect of a Government appointment?”

Mrs. Mel raised her eyelids to him.

“In time—in time, mother!”

“Mention your proposal to the creditors when you meet them this day week,” she said.

Neither of them spoke for several minutes. Then Evan came close to her, saying:

“What *is* it you want of me, mother?”

“I want nothing, Van—I can support myself.”

“But what would you have me do, mother?”

“Be honest; do your duty, and don’t be a fool about it.”

“I will try,” he rejoined. “You tell me to make the money. Where and how can I make it? I am perfectly willing to work.”

“In this house,” said Mrs. Mel; and, as this was pretty clear speaking, she stood up to lend her figure to it.

“Here?” faltered Evan. “What! be a ——”

“Tailor!” The word did not sting her tongue.

“I? Oh, that’s quite impossible!” said Evan. And visions of leprosy, and Rose shrinking her skirts from contact with him, shadowed out and away in his mind.

“Understand your choice!” Mrs. Mel imperiously spoke. “What are brains given you for? To be played the fool with by idiots and women? You have £5,000 to pay to save your father from being called a rogue. You can only make the money in one way, which is open to you. This business might produce a thousand pounds a-year and more. In seven or eight years you may clear your father’s name, and live better all the time than many of your bankrupt gentlemen. You have told the creditors you will pay them. Do you think they’re gaping fools, to be satisfied by a History of Portugal? If you refuse to take the business at once, they will sell me up, and quite right too. Understand your choice. There’s Mr. Goren has promised to have you in London a couple of months, and teach you what he can. He is a kind friend. Would any of your gentlemen acquaintance do the like for you? Understand your choice. You will be a beggar—the son of a rogue—or an honest man who has cleared his father’s name!”

During this strenuously-uttered allocution, Mrs. Mel, though her chest heaved but faintly against her crossed hands, showed by the dilatation of her eyes, and the light in them, that she felt her words. There is that in the aspect of a fine frame breathing hard facts, which, to a youth who has been tumbled headlong from his card-

castles and airy fabrics, is masterful, and like the pressure of a Fate. Evan drooped his head.

“Now,” said Mrs. Mel, “you shall have some supper.”

Evan told her he could not eat.

“I insist upon your eating,” said Mrs. Mel; “empty stomachs are foul counsellors.”

“Mother! do you want to drive me mad?” cried Evan.

She looked at him to see whether the string she held him by would bear this slight additional strain: decided not to press a small point.

“Then go to bed and sleep on it,” she said—sure of him—and gave her cheek for his kiss, for she never performed the operation, but kept her mouth, as she remarked, for food and speech, and not for slobbering mummeries.

Evan returned to his solitary room. He sat on the bed and tried to think, oppressed by horrible sensations of self-contempt, that caused whatever he touched to sicken him.

There were the Douglas and the Percy on the wall. It was a happy and a glorious time, was it not, when men lent each other blows that killed outright; when to be brave and cherish noble feelings brought honour; when strength of arm and steadiness of heart won fortune; when the fair stars of earth—sweet women—wakened and

warmed the love of squires of low degree. This legacy of the dead man's hand! Evan would have paid it with his blood; but to be in bondage all his days to it; through it to lose all that was dear to him; to wear the length of a loathed existence!—we should pardon a young man's wretchedness at the prospect, for it was in a time before our joyful era of universal equality. Yet he never cast a shade of blame upon his father.

The hours moved on, and he found himself staring at his small candle, which struggled more and more faintly with the morning light, like his own flickering ambition against the facts of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTRODUCE AN ECCENTRIC.

AT the Aurora—one of those rare antiquated taverns, smelling of comfortable time and solid English fare, that had sprung up in the great coffee days, when taverns were clubs, and had since subsisted on the attachment of steady bachelor Templars—there had been dismay, and even sorrow, for a month. The most constant patron of the establishment—an old gentleman who had dined there for seven-and-twenty years, four days in the week, off dishes dedicated to the particular days, and had grown grey with the landlady, the cook, and the head-waiter—this old gentleman had abruptly withheld his presence. Though his name, his residence, his occupation, were things only to be speculated on at the Aurora, he was very well known there, and as men are best to be known: that is to say, by their habits. Some affection for him also was felt. The landlady looked on him as a part of the house. The cook and the waiter were accustomed to receive acceptable compliments from him monthly. His precise words, his

regular ancient jokes, his pint of Madeira and after-pint of port, his antique bow to the landlady, passing out and in, his method of spreading his table-napkin on his lap and looking up at the ceiling ere he fell to, and how he talked to himself during the repast, and indulged in short chuckles, and the one look of perfect felicity that played over his features when he had taken his first sip of port—these were matters it pained them at the Aurora to have to remember. For three weeks the resolution not to regard him as of the past was general. The Aurora was the old gentleman's home. Men do not play truant from home at sixty years of age. He must, therefore, be seriously indisposed. The kind heart of the landlady fretted to think he might have no soul to nurse and care for him; but she kept his corner near the fire-place vacant, and took care that his pint of Madeira was there. The belief was gaining ground that he had gone, and that nothing but his ghost would ever sit there again. Still the melancholy ceremony continued: for the landlady was not without a secret hope that, in spite of his reserve and the mystery surrounding him, he would have sent her a last word. The cook and head-waiter, interrogated as to their dealings with the old gentleman, testified solemnly to the fact of their having performed their duty by him. They would not

go against their interests so much as to forget one of his ways, they said—taking oath, as it were, by their lower nature, in order to be credited: an instinct men have of one another. The landlady could not contradict them, for the old gentleman had made no complaint; but then she called to memory that fifteen years back, in such and such a year, Wednesday's dish had been, by shameful oversight, furnished him for Tuesday's, and he had eaten it quietly, but refused his port; which pathetic event had caused alarm and inquiry, when the error was discovered, and apologised for, the old gentleman merely saying, "Don't let it happen again." Next day he drank his port, as usual, and the wheels of the Aurora went smoothly. The landlady was thus justified in averring that something had been done by somebody, albeit unable to point to anything specific. Women, who are almost as deeply bound to habit as old gentlemen, possess more of its spiritual element, and are warned by dreams, omens, creepings of the flesh, unwonted chills, suicide of china, and other shadowing signs, when a break is to be anticipated, or has occurred. The landlady of the Aurora tavern was visited by none of these, and with that sweet and beautiful trust which habit gives, and which boastful love or vainer earthly qualities would fail in affecting, she ordered that

the pint of Madeira stood from six o'clock in the evening till seven—a small monument of confidence in him who was at one instant the “poor old dear;” at another, the “naughty old gad-about;” further, the “faithless old good-for-nothing;” and again, the “blessed pet” of the landlady’s parlour, alternately and indiscriminately apostrophised by herself, her sister, and daughter.

On the last day of the month a step was heard coming up the long alley which led from the riotous, scrambling street to the plentiful, cheerful heart of the Aurora. The landlady knew the step. She checked the natural flutterings of her ribbons, toned down the strong simper that was on her lips, rose, pushed aside her daughter, and, as the step approached, curtsied composedly. Old Habit lifted his hat, and passed. With the same touching confidence in the Aurora that the Aurora had in him, he went straight to his corner, expressed no surprise at his welcome by the Madeira, and thereby apparently indicated that his appearance should enjoy a similar immunity.

As of old, he called “Jonathan!” and was not to be disturbed till he did so. Seeing that Jonathan smirked and twiddled his napkin, the old gentleman added, “Thursday!”

But Jonathan, a man, had not his mistress’s

keen intuition of the dehortment necessitated by the case, or was incapable of putting the screw upon weak excited nature, for he continued to smirk, and was remarking how glad he was, he was sure, and something he had dared to think and almost to fear, when the old gentleman called to him, as if he were at the other end of the room, "Will you order Thursday, or not, sir?" Whereat Jonathan flew, and two or three cosy diners glanced up from their plates, or the paper, smiled, and pursued their capital occupation.

"Glad to see me!" the old gentleman muttered, querulously. "Of course, glad to see a customer! Why do you tell me that? Talk! tattle! might as well have a woman to wait—just!"

He wiped his forehead largely with his handkerchief, as one whom Calamity hunted a little too hard in summer weather.

"No tumbling-room for the wine, too!"

That was his next grievance. He changed the pint of Madeira from his left side to his right, and went under his handkerchief again, feverishly. The world was severe with this old gentleman.

"Ah! clock wrong now!"

He leaned back like a man who can no longer carry his burdens, informing Jonathan, on his coming up to place the roll of bread and firm

butter, that he was forty seconds too fast, as if it were a capital offence, and he deserved to step into Eternity for outstripping Time.

“But, I daresay, you don’t understand the importance of a minute,” said the old gentleman, bitterly. “Not you, or any of you. Better if we had run a little ahead of *your* minute, perhaps—and the rest of you! Do you think you can cancel the mischief that’s done in the world in that minute, sir, by hurrying ahead like that? Tell me!”

Rather at a loss, Jonathan scanned the clock seriously, and observed that it was not quite a minute too fast.

The old gentleman pulled out his watch.

“Forty seconds! That’s enough. Men are hung for what’s done in forty seconds. Mark the hour, sir! mark the hour, and read the newspaper attentively for a year!”

With which stern direction the old gentleman interlaced his fingers on the table, and sounded three emphatic knocks, while his chin, his lips, nose, and eyebrows were pushed up to a regiment of wrinkles.

“We’ll put it right, sir, presently,” murmured Jonathan, in soothing tones; “I’ll attend to it myself.”

The old gentleman seemed not to object to making the injury personal, though he com-

plained on broad grounds, for he grunted that a lying clock was hateful to him; subsequently sinking into contemplation of his thumbs,—a sign known to Jonathan as indicative of the old gentleman's system having resolved, in spite of external outrages, to be fortified with calm to meet the repast.

It is not fair to go behind an eccentric; but the fact was, this old gentleman was slightly ashamed of his month's vagrancy and cruel conduct, and cloaked his behaviour towards the Aurora, in all the charges he could muster against it. You see, he was very human, albeit an odd form of the race.

Happily for his digestion of Thursday, the cook, warned by Jonathan, kept the old gentleman's time, not the Aurora's: and the dinner was correct; the dinner was eaten in peace; the old gentleman began to address his plate vigorously, poured out his Madeira, and chuckled, as the familiar ideas engendered by good wine were revived in him. Jonathan reported at the bar that the old gentleman was all right again.

One would like here to pause, while our worthy ancient feeds, and indulge in a short essay on Habit, to show what a sacred and admirable thing it is that makes flimsy Time substantial, and consolidates his triple life. It is proof that we have come to the end of dreams, and Time's delusions,

and are determined to sit down at Life's feast and carve for ourselves. Its day is the child of yesterday, and has a claim on to-morrow. Whereas those who have no such plan of existence and sum of their wisdom to show, the winds blow them as they list. Sacred, I say; for is it not a sort of aping in brittle clay of the everlasting Round we look to? We sneer at the slaves of Habit; but may it not be the result of a strong soul, after shooting vainly thither and yon, and finding not the path it seeketh, lying down weariedly and imprinting its great instinct on the prison-house where it must serve its term? So that a boiled pullet and a pint of Madeira on Thursdays, for certain, becomes a solace and a symbol of perpetuity; and a pint of port every day, is a noble piece of Habit, and a distinguishing stamp on the body of Time, fore and aft; one that I, for my part, wish every man in these islands might daily affix. Consider, then, mercifully, the wrath of him on whom carelessness or forgetfulness has brought a snap in the links of Habit. You incline to scorn him because, his slippers misplaced, or asparagus not on his table the first day of a particular spring month, he gazes blankly and sighs as one who saw the End. To you it may appear small. You call to him to be a man. He is: but he is also an immortal, and his confidence in unceasing orderly pro-

gression is rudely dashed. Believe me, the philosopher, whose optics are symbols, weeps for him!

But the old gentleman has finished his dinner and his Madeira, and says: "Now, Jonathan, 'thock' the port!"—his joke when matters have gone well: meant to express the sound of the uncorking, probably. The habit of making good jokes is rare, as you know: old gentlemen have not yet attained to it: nevertheless Jonathan enjoys this one, which has seen a generation in and out, for he knows its purport to be, "My heart is open."

And now is a great time with the old gentleman. He sips, and in his eyes the world grows rosy, and he exchanges mute or monosyllable salutes here and there. His habit is to avoid converse; but he will let a light remark season meditation.

He says to Jonathan: "The bill for the month."

"Yes, sir," Jonathan replies. "Would you not prefer, sir, to have the items added on to the month ensuing?"

"I asked you for the bill of the month," said the old gentleman, with an irritated voice and a twinkle in his eye.

Jonathan bowed; but his aspect betrayed perplexity, and that perplexity was soon shared by

the landlady: for Jonathan said, he was convinced the old gentleman intended to pay for sixteen days, and the landlady could not bring her hand to charge him for more than two. Here was the dilemma foreseen by the old gentleman, and it added vastly to the flavour of the port.

Pleasantly tickled, he sat gazing at his glass, and let the minutes fly. He knew the part he would act in his little farce. If charged for the whole month, he would peruse the bill deliberately, and perhaps cry out "Hulloa?" and then snap at Jonathan for the interposition of a remark. But if charged for two days, he would wish to be told whether they were demented, those people outside, and scornfully return the bill to Jonathan.

A slap on the shoulder, and a voice: "Found you at last, Tom!" violently shattered the excellent plot, and made the old gentleman start. He beheld Mr. Andrew Cogglesby.

"Drinking port, Tom?" said Mr. Andrew. "I'll join you:" and he sat down opposite to him, rubbing his hands and pushing back his hair.

Jonathan entering briskly with the bill, fell back a step, in alarm. The old gentleman, whose inviolacy was thus rudely assailed, sat staring at the intruder, his mouth compressed, and three fingers round his glass, which it was doubtful whether he was not going to hurl at him.

“Waiter!” Mr. Andrew carelessly hailed, “a pint of this port, if you please.”

Jonathan sought the countenance of the old gentleman.

“Do you hear, sir?” cried the latter, turning his wrath on him. “Another pint!” He added: “Take back the bill;” and away went Jonathan to relate fresh marvels to his mistress.

Mr. Andrew then addressed the old gentleman in the most audacious manner.

“Astonished to see me here, Tom? Dare say you are. I knew you came somewhere in this neighbourhood, and, as I wanted to speak to you very particularly, and you wouldn’t be visible till Monday, why, I spied into two or three places, and here I am.”

You might see they were brothers. They had the same bushy eyebrows, the same healthy colour in their cheeks, the same thick shoulders, and brisk way of speaking, and clear, sharp, though kindly, eyes; only Tom was cast in larger proportions than Andrew, and had gotten the grey furniture of Time for his natural wear. Perhaps, too, a cross in early life had a little twisted him, and set his mouth in a rueful bunch, out of which occasionally came biting things. Mr. Andrew carried his head up, and eyed every man living with the benevolence of a patriarch, dashed with the impudence of a London sparrow. Tom had a

nagging air, and a trifle of acridity on his broad features. Still, any one at a glance could have sworn they were brothers, and Jonathan unhesitatingly proclaimed it at the Aurora bar.

Mr. Andrew's hands were working together, and at them, and at his face, the old gentleman continued to look with a firmly interrogating air.

"Want to know what brings me, Tom? I'll tell you presently. Hot,—isn't it?"

"What the deuce are you taking exercise for?" the old gentleman burst out, and having unlocked his mouth, he began to puff and alter his posture.

"There you are, thawed in a minute!" said Mr. Andrew. "What's an eccentric? a child grown grey. It isn't mine. I read it somewhere. Ah, here's the port!—good, I'll warrant."

Jonathan deferentially uncorked, excessive composure on his visage. He arranged the table-cloth to a nicety, fixed the bottle with exactness, and was only sent scudding by the old gentleman's muttering of: "Eavesdropping pie!" followed by a short, "Go!" and even then he must delay to sweep off a particular crumb.

"Good it is!" said Mr. Andrew, rolling the flavour on his lips, as he put down his glass. "I follow you in port, Tom. Elder brother!"

The old gentleman also drank, and was mollified enough to reply: "Shan't follow you in parliament."

“ Haven't forgiven that yet, Tom ? ”

“ No great harm done when you're silent.”

“ Ha ! ha ! Well, I don't do much mischief, then.”

“ No. Thank your want of capacity ! ”

Mr. Andrew laughed good-humouredly. “ Capital place to let off gas in, Tom.”

“ Thought so. I shouldn't be safe there.”

“ Eh ? Why not ? ”

Mr. Andrew expected the grim joke, and encouraged it.

“ I do carry some light about,” the old gentleman emphasised, and Mr. Andrew called him too bad ; and the old gentleman almost consented to smile.

“ 'Gad, you blow us up out of the House. What would you do in ? Smithereens, I think ! ”

The old gentleman looked mild promise of Smithereens, in that contingency, adding : “ No danger.”

“ Capital port ! ” said Mr. Andrew, replenishing the glasses. “ I ought to have inquired where they kept the best port. I might have known you'd stick by it. By the way, talking of Parliament, there's talk of a new election for Fallowfield. You have a vote there. Will you give it to Jocelyn ? There's talk of his standing.”

“ If he'll wear petticoats, I'll give him my vote.”

“ There you go, Tom ! ”

“I hate masquerades. You’re penny trumpets of the women. That tattle comes from the bed-curtains. When a petticoat steps forward I give it my vote, or else I button it up in my pocket.”

This was probably one of the longest speeches he had ever delivered at the Aurora. There was extra port in it. Jonathan, who from his place of observation noted the length of time it occupied, though he was unable to gather the context, glanced at Mr. Andrew with a mixture of awe and sly satisfaction. Mr. Andrew, laughing, signalled for another pint.

“So you’ve come here for my vote, have you?” said the old gentleman.

“Why, no; not exactly that, Tom,” Mr. Andrew answered, blinking and passing it by.

Jonathan brought the fresh pint, and the old gentleman filled for himself, drank, and said emphatically, and with a confounding voice:

“Your women have been setting you on me, sir!”

Mr. Andrew protested that he was entirely mistaken.

“You’re the puppet of your women!”

“Well, Tom, not in this instance. Here’s to the bachelors, and brother Tom at their head!”

It seemed to be Mr. Andrew’s object to help his companion to carry a certain quantity of port,

as if he knew a virtue it had to subdue him, and to have fixed on a particular measure that he should hold before he addressed him specially. Arrived at this, he said :

“ Look here, Tom. I know your ways. I shouldn't have bothered you here ; I never have before ; but we couldn't very well talk it over in business hours ; and besides you're never at the brewery till Monday, and the matter's rather urgent.”

“ Why don't you speak like that in Parliament ? ” the old man interposed.

“ Because Parliament isn't my brother,” replied Mr. Andrew. “ You know, Tom, you never quite took to my wife's family.”

“ I'm not a match for fine ladies, Nan.”

“ Well, Harriet would have taken to you, Tom, and will now, if you'll let her. Of course, it's a pity if she's ashamed of——hem ! You found it out about the Lymport people, Tom, and you've kept the secret and respected her feelings, and I thank you for it. Women are odd in those things, you know. She mustn't imagine I've heard a whisper. I believe it would kill her.”

The old gentleman shook silently.

“ Do you want me to travel over the kingdom, hawking her for the daughter of a marquis ? ”

“ Now, don't joke, Tom. I'm serious. Are you not a Radical at heart ? Why do you make

such a set against the poor women? What do we spring from?"

"I take off my hat, Nan, when I see a cobbler's stall."

"And I, Tom, don't care a rush who knows it. Homo—something; but we never had much schooling. We've thriven, and should help those we can. We've got on in the world . . ."

"Wife come back from Lymport?" sneered the old gentleman.

Mr. Andrew hurriedly, and with some confusion, explained that she had not been able to go, on account of the child.

"Account of the child!" his brother repeated, working his chin contemptuously. "Sisters gone?"

"They're stopping with us," said Mr. Andrew, reddening.

"So the tailor was left to the kites and the crows. Ah! hum!" and Tom chuckled.

"You're angry with me, Tom, for coming here," said Mr. Andrew. "I see what it is. Thought how it would be! You're offended, old Tom."

"Come where you like," returned Tom, "the place is open. It's a fool that hopes for peace anywhere. They sent a woman here to wait on me, this day month."

"That's a shame!" said Mr. Andrew, propitiatingly. "Well, never mind, Tom: the

women are sometimes in the way.—Evan went down to bury his father. He's there now. You wouldn't see him when he was at the brewery, Tom. He's—upon my honour! he's a good young fellow."

"A fine young gentleman, I've no doubt, Nan."

"A really good lad, Tom. No nonsense. I've come here to speak to you about him."

Mr. Andrew drew a letter from his pocket, pursuing: "Just throw aside your prejudices, and read this. It's a letter I had from him this morning. But first I must tell you how the case stands."

"Know more than you can tell me, Nan," said Tom, turning over the flavour of a gulp of port.

"Well, then, just let me repeat it. He has been capitally educated; he has always been used to good society: well, we mustn't sneer at it: good society's better than bad, you'll allow. He has refined tastes: well, you wouldn't like to live among crossing-sweepers, Tom. He's clever and accomplished, can speak and write in three languages: I wish I had his abilities. He has good manners: well, Tom, you know you like them as well as anybody. And now—but read for yourself."

"Yah!" went old Tom. "The women have been playing the fool with him since he was a baby. I read his rigmorole? No."

Mr. Andrew shrugged his shoulders, and opened the letter, saying: "Well, listen;" and then he coughed, and rapidly skimmed the introductory part. "Excuses himself for addressing me formally—poor boy! Circumstances have altered his position towards the world: found his father's affairs in a bad state: only chance of paying off father's debts to undertake management of business, and bind himself to so much a year. But there, Tom, if you won't read it, you miss the poor young fellow's character. He says that he has forgotten his station: fancied he was superior to trade, but hates debt; and will not allow anybody to throw dirt at his father's name, while he can work to clear it; and will sacrifice his pride. Come, Tom, that's manly, isn't it? I call it touching, poor lad!"

Manly it may have been, but the touching part of it was a feature missed in Mr. Andrew's hands. At any rate, it did not appear favourably to impress Tom, whose chin had gathered its ominous puckers, as he inquired:

"What's the trade? he don't say."

Andrew added, with a wave of the hand: "Out of a sort of feeling for his sisters—I like him for it. Now what I want to ask you, Tom, is, whether we can't assist him in some way! Why couldn't we take him into our office, and fix him there, eh? If he works well—we're both getting

old, and my brats are chicks—we might, by-and-by, give him a share.”

“Make a brewer of him? Ha! there’d be another mighty sacrifice for his pride!”

“Come, come, Tom,” said Andrew, “he’s my wife’s brother, and I’m your’s; and — there, you know what women are. They like to preserve appearances: we ought to consider them.”

“Preserve appearances!” echoed Tom: “ha! who’ll do that for them better than a tailor?”

Mr. Andrew was an impatient little man, fitter for a kind action than to plead a cause. Jeering jarred on him; and from the moment his brother began it, he was of small service to Evan. He flung back against the partition of the compound, rattling it to the disturbance of many a quiet digestion.

“Tom,” he cried, “I believe you’re a screw!”

“Never said I wasn’t,” rejoined Tom, as he finished his port. “I’m a bachelor, and a person—you’re married, and an object. I won’t have the tailor’s family at *my* coat-tails.”

“Do you mean to say, Tom, you don’t like the young fellow? The Countess says he’s half engaged to an heiress; and he has a chance of appointments—of course, nothing may come of them. But do you mean to say, you don’t like him for what he has done?”

Tom made his jaw disagreeably prominent.
“’Fraid I’m guilty of that crime.”

“And you that swear at people pretending to be above their station!” exclaimed Andrew. “I shall get in a passion. I can’t stand this. Here, waiter! what have I to pay?”

“Go,” cried the time-honoured guest of the Aurora to Jonathan, advancing.

Andrew pressed the very roots of his hair back from his red forehead, and sat upright and resolute, glancing at Tom. And now ensued a curious scene of family blood. For no sooner did elderly Tom observe this bantam-like demeanour of his brother, than he ruffled his feathers likewise, and looked down on him, agitating his wig over a prodigious frown. Whereof came the following sharp colloquy; Andrew beginning:

“I’ll pay off the debts out of my own pocket.”

“You *can* make a greater fool of yourself, then?”

“He shan’t be a tailor!”

“He shan’t be a brewer!”

“I say he shall live like a gentleman!”

“I say he shall squat like a Turk!”

Bang went Andrew’s hand on the table: “I’ve pledged my word, mind!”

Tom made a counter demonstration: “And I’ll have my way!”

“ Hang it ! I can be as eccentric as you,” said Andrew.

“ And I as much a donkey as you, if I try hard,” said Tom.

Something of the cobbler's stall followed this ; till waxing furious, Tom sung out to Jonathan, hovering around them in watchful timidity, “ More port ! ” and the words immediately fell oily on the wrath of the brothers : both commenced wiping their heads with their handkerchiefs : the faces of both emerged and met, with a half-laugh : and, severally determined to keep to what they had spoken, there was a tacit accord between them to drop the subject.

Like sunshine after smart rain, the port shone on these brothers. Like a voice from the pastures after the bellowing of the thunder, Andrew's voice asked : “ Got rid of that twinge of the gout, Tom ? Did you rub in that ointment ? ” while Tom's replied : “ Ay. How about that rheumatism of yours ? Have you tried that Indy oil ? ” receiving a like assurance.

The remainder of the port ebbed in meditation and chance remarks. The bit of storm had done them both good ; and Tom especially—the cynical, carping, grim old gentleman—was much improved by the nearer resemblance of his manner to Andrew's.

Behind this unaffected fraternal concord, how-

ever, the fact that they were pledged to a race in eccentricity, was present. They had been rivals before; and anterior to the date of his marriage, Andrew had done odd eclipsing things. But Andrew required prompting to it; he required to be put upon his mettle. Whereas, it was more nature with Tom: nature and the absence of a wife, gave him advantages over Andrew. Besides, he had his character to maintain. He had said the word: and the first vanity of your born eccentric is, that he shall be taken for infallible.

Presently Andrew ducked his head to mark the evening clouds flushing over the court-yard of the Aurora.

“Time to be off, Tom,” he said: “wife at home.”

“Ah!” Tom answered. “Well, I haven’t got to go to bed so early.”

“What an old rogue you are, Tom!” Andrew pushed his elbows forward on the table amiably. “’Gad, we haven’t drunk wine together since—by Jingo! we’ll have another pint.”

“Many as you like,” said Tom.

Over the succeeding pint, Andrew, in whose veins the port was merry, favoured his brother with an imitation of Major Strike, and indicated his dislike to that officer. Tom informed him that Major Strike was speculating.

“The ass eats at my table, and treats me with contempt.”

“Just tell him that you’re putting by the bones for him. He’ll want ’em.”

Then Andrew, with another glance at the clouds, now violet on a grey sky, said he must really be off. Upon which Tom observed: “Don’t come here again.”

“You old rascal, Tom!” cried Andrew, swinging over the table: “it’s quite jolly for us to be hob-a-nobbing together once more. ’Gad! — no, we won’t though! I promised Harriet. Eh? What say, Tom?”

“’Nother pint, Nan?”

Tom shook his head in a roguishly-cosy, irresistible way. Andrew, from a shake of denial and resolve, fell into the same; and there sat the two brothers—a jolly picture!

The hour was ten, when Andrew Cogglesby, comforted by Tom’s remark, that he, Tom, had a wig, and that he, Andrew, would have a wiggling, left the Aurora; and he left it singing a song. That he would remember his match that night, few might like to wager. Tom Cogglesby had a better-seasoned bachelor head. He still sat at his table, holding before him Evan’s letter, of which he had got possession; and knocking it round and round with a stroke of the forefinger, to the tune of, “Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, ’pothecary,

hear; and she reached her mother, having, at least, cut off communication with the object of conveyance.

The Countess kissed her mother, kissed Mrs. Fiske, and asked sharply for Evan. Mrs. Fiske let her know that Evan was in the house.

“Where?” inquired the Countess. “I have news of the utmost importance for him. I must see him.”

“Where is he, aunt?” said Mrs. Fiske. “In the shop, I think; I wonder he did not see you passing, Louisa.”

The Countess went bolt down into a chair.

“Go to him, Jane,” said Mrs. Mel. “Tell him Louisa is here, and don’t return.”

Mrs. Fiske departed, and the Countess smiled.

“Thank you, Mama! you know I never could bear that odious, vulgar little woman. Oh, the heat! You talk of Portugal! And, oh! poor dear Papa! what I have suffered!”

Flapping her laces for air, and wiping her eyes for sorrow, the Countess poured a flood of sympathy into her mother’s ears and then said:

“But you have made a great mistake, Mama, in allowing Evan to put his foot into that place. He—beloved of an heiress! Why, if an enemy should hear of it, it would ruin him—positively blast him—for ever. And that she loves him I

have proof positive. Yes; with all her frankness, the little thing cannot conceal that from me now. She loves him! And I desire you to guess, Mama, whether rivals will not abound? And what enemy so much to be dreaded as a rival? And what revelation so awful as that he has stood in a—in a—boutique?"

Mrs. Mel maintained her usual attitude for listening. It had occurred to her that it might do no good to tell the grand lady, her daughter, of Evan's resolution, so she simply said, "It is discipline for him," and left her to speak a private word with the youth.

Timidly the Countess inspected the furniture of the apartment, taking chills at the dingy articles she saw, in the midst of her heat. That she should have sprung from this! The thought was painful; still she could forgive Providence so much. But should it ever be known she had sprung from this! Alas! she felt she never could pardon such a dire betrayal. She had come in good spirits, but the mention of Evan's back-sliding had troubled her extremely, and though she did not say to herself, What was the benefit resulting from her father's dying, if Evan would be so base-minded? she thought the thing indefinitely, and was forming the words on her mouth, One Harrington in a shop is equal to all! when Evan appeared alone.

“Why, goodness gracious! where’s your moustache?” cried the Countess.

“Gone the way of hair!” said Evan, coldly stooping to her forehead.

“Such a distinction!” the Countess continued, reproachfully. “Why, *mon Dieu!* one could hardly tell you, as you look now, from the very commonest tradesman—if you were not rather handsome and something of a figure. It’s a disguise, Evan—do you know that?”

“And I’ve parted with it—that’s all,” said Evan. “No more disguises for me!”

The Countess immediately took his arm, and walked with him to a window. His face was certainly changed. Murmuring that the air of Lymport was bad for him, and that he must leave it instantly, she bade him sit and attend to what she was about to say.

“While you have been here, degenerating, Evan, day by day—as you always do out of my sight—degenerating! no less a word!—I have been slaving in your interests. Yes; I have forced the Jocelyns socially to acknowledge us. I have not slept; I have eaten bare morsels. Do abstinence and vigils clear the wits? I know not; but indeed they have enabled me to do more in a week than would suffice for a lifetime. Hark to me. I have discovered Rose’s secret. Si! It is so! Rose loves you. You blush; you blush

like a girl. She *loves* you, and you have let yourself be seen in a shop! Contrast me the two things. Oh! in verity, dreadful as it is, one could almost laugh. But the moment I lose sight of you, my instructions vanish as quickly as that hair on your superior lip, which took such time to perfect. Alas! you must grow it again immediately. Use any perfumer's contrivance. Rowland! I have great faith in Rowland. Without him, I believe, there would have been many bald women committing suicide! You remember the bottle I gave to the Count de Villa Flor? 'Countess,' he said to me, 'you have saved this egg-shell from a crack, by helping to cover it'—for so he called his head—the top, you know, was beginning to shine like an egg. And I do fear me he would have done it. Ah! you do not conceive what the dread of baldness is! To a woman, death—death is preferable to baldness! Baldness *is* death! And a wig—a wig! Oh, horror! total extinction is better than to rise again in a wig! But you are young, and play with hair. But I was saying, I went to see the Jocelyns. I was introduced to Sir Franks and his lady and the wealthy grandmother. And I have an invitation for you, Evan!—you unmannered boy, that you do not bow! A gentle incline forward of the shoulders, and the eyes fixed softly, your upper lids drooping triflingly, as if you thanked with gentle sincerity,

but were indifferent. Well, well, if you will not! An invitation for you to spend part of the autumn at Beckley Court, the ancestral domain, where there will be company—the nobles of the land! Consider that. You say it was bold in me to face them after that horrible man committed us on board the vessel? A Harrington is anything but a coward. I did go—and because I am devoted to your interests. That very morning, I saw announced in the paper, just beneath poor Andrew's hand, as he held it up at the breakfast-table, reading it, I saw among the deaths, Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay, Baronet, of quinsy! Twice that good man has come to my rescue! Oh! I welcomed him as a piece of Providence! I turned and said to Harriet, 'I see they have put poor Papa in the paper.' Harriet was staggered. I took the paper from Andrew, and pointed it to her. She has no readiness. She has had no foreign training. She could not comprehend, and Andrew stood on tiptoe, and peeped. He has a bad cough, and coughed himself black in the face. I attribute it to excessive bad manners and his cold feelings. He left the room. I reproached Harriet. But, oh! the singularity of the excellent fortune of such an event at such a time! It showed that our Harrington-luck had not forsaken us. I hurried to the Jocelyns instantly. Of course, it cleared away any sus-

picious aroused in them by that horrible man on board the vessel. And the tears I wept for Sir Abraham, Evan, in verity they were tears of deep and sincere gratitude! What is your mouth knitting the corners at? Are you laughing?"

Evan hastily composed his visage to the melancholy that was no counterfeit in him just then.

"Yes," continued the Countess, easily reassured, "I shall ever feel a debt to Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay. I dare say we *are* related to him. At least he has done us more service than many a rich and titled relative. No one supposes he would acknowledge poor Papa. I can forgive him that! Evan!" the Countess pointed out her finger with mournful and impressive majesty, "as we look down on that monkey, people of rank and consideration in society look on what poor dear Papa was."

This was partly true, for Jacko sat on a chair, in his favourite attitude, copied accurately from the workmen of the establishment at their labour with needle and thread. Growing cognisant of the infamy of his posture, the Countess begged Evan to drive him out of her sight, and took a sniff at her smelling-bottle.

She went on: "Now, dear Van, you would hear of your sweet Rose?"

"Not a word!" Evan hastily answered.

“Why, what does this indicate? Whims! Then you *do* love?”

“I tell you, Louisa, I don't want to hear a word of any of them,” said Evan, with an angry gleam in his eyes. “They are nothing to me, nor I to them. I—my walk in life is not theirs.”

“Faint heart! faint heart!” the Countess lifted a proverbial forefinger.

“Thank Heaven, I shall have the consolation of not going about, and bowing and smirking like an impostor!” Evan exclaimed.

There was a wider intelligence in the Countess's arrested gaze than she chose to fashion into speech.

“I knew,” she said, “I knew how the air of this horrible Lymport would act on you. But while I live, Evan, you shall not sink in the sludge. You, with all the pains I have lavished on you! and with your presence!—for you have a presence, so rare among young men in this England! You, who have been to a Court, and interchanged bows with duchesses, and I know not what besides—nay, I do not accuse you; but if you had not been a mere boy, and an English boy—poor Eugenia herself confessed to me that you had a look—a tender cleaving of the under-lids—that made her catch her hand to her heart sometimes: it reminded her so acutely of false Belmaraña. Could you have had a greater com-

pliment than that? You shall not stop here another day!"

"True," said Evan, "for I'm going to London to-night."

"Not to London," the Countess returned, with a conquering glance, "but to Beckley Court—and with me."

"To London, Louisa, with Mr. Goren."

Again the Countess eyed him largely; but took, as it were, a side-path from her broad thought, saying: "Yes, fortunes are made in London, if you would they should be rapid."

She meditated. At that moment Dandy knocked at the door, and called outside: "Please, master, Mr. Goren says there's a gentleman in the shop—wants to see you."

"Very well," replied Evan, moving. He was swung violently round.

The Countess had clutched him by the arm. A fearful expression was on her face.

"Whither do you go?" she said.

"To the shop, Louisa."

Too late to arrest the villanous word, she pulled at him. "Are you quite insane? Consent to be seen by a gentleman *there*? What has come to you? You must be lunatic! Are we all to be utterly ruined—disgraced?"

"Is my mother to starve?" said Evan.

"Absurd rejoinder! No! You should have

sold everything here before this. She can live with Harriet—she—once out of this horrible element—she would not show it. But, Evan, you are getting away from me : you are not going ?—speak !”

“ I am going,” said Evan.

The Countess clung to him, exclaiming : “ Never, while I have the power to detain you !” but as he was firm and strong, she had recourse to her woman’s aids, and burst into a storm of sobs on his shoulder—a scene of which Mrs. Mel was, for some seconds, a composed spectator.

“ What’s the matter now ?” said Mrs. Mel.

Evan impatiently explained the case. Mrs. Mel desired her daughter to avoid being ridiculous, and making two fools in her family ; and at the same time that she told Evan there was no occasion for him to go, contrived, with a look, to make the advice a command. He, in that state of mind when one takes bitter delight in doing an abhorred duty, was hardly willing to be submissive ; but the despair of the Countess reduced him, and for her sake he consented to forego the sacrifice of his pride which was now his sad, sole pleasure. Feeling him linger, the Countess relaxed her grasp. Hers were tears that dried as soon as they had served their end ; and, to give him the full benefit of his conduct, she said : “ I knew Evan would be persuaded by me.”

Evan pitifully pressed her hand, and sighed.

"Tea is on the table down-stairs," said Mrs. Mel. "I have cooked something for you, Louisa. Do you sleep here to-night?"

"Can I tell you, Mama!" murmured the Countess. "I am dependent on our Evan."

"Oh! well, we will eat first," said Mrs. Mel, and they went to the table below, the Countess begging her mother to drop titles in designating her to the servants, which caused Mrs. Mel to say:

"There is but one. I do the cooking," and the Countess, ever disposed to flatter, and be suave, even when stung by a fact or a phrase, added:

"And a beautiful cook you used to be, dear Mama!"

At the table, awaiting them, sat Mrs. Wishaw, Mrs. Fiske, and Mr. Goren, who soon found themselves enveloped in the Countess's graciousness. Mr. Goren would talk of trade, and compare Lympport business with London, and the Countess, loftily interested in his remarks, drew him out to disgust her brother. Mrs. Wishaw, in whom the Countess at once discovered a frivolous pretentious woman of the moneyed trading class, she treated as one who was alive to society, and surveyed matters from a station in the world, leading her to think that she tolerated

Mr. Goren, as a lady-Christian of the highest rank should tolerate the insects that toil for us. Mrs. Fiske was not so tractable, for Mrs. Fiske was hostile and armed. Mrs. Fiske adored the great Mel, and she had never loved Louisa. Hence, she scorned Louisa on account of her late behaviour towards her dead parent. The Countess saw through her, and laboured to be friendly with her, while she rendered her disagreeable in the eyes of Mrs. Wishaw, and let Mrs. Wishaw perceive that sympathy was possible between them;—manœuvring a trifle too delicate, perhaps, for the people present, but sufficient to blind its keen-witted author to the something that was being concealed from herself, of which something, nevertheless, her senses apprehensively warned her; and they might have spoken to her wits, but that mortals cannot, unaided, guess, or will not, unless struck in the face by the fact, credit, what is to their minds the last horror.

“I came down in the coach, quite accidental, with this gentleman,” said Mrs. Wishaw, fanning a cheek and nodding at Mr. Goren. “I’m an old flame of dear Mel’s. I knew him when he was an apprentice in London. Now, wasn’t it odd? Your mother—I suppose I must call you ‘my lady?’”

The Countess breathed a tender “spare me,” with a smile that added, “among friends!”

Mrs. Wishaw resumed: "Your mother was an old flame of this gentleman's, I found out. So there were two old flames, and I couldn't help thinking! But I was so glad to have seen dear Mel once more."

"Ah!" sighed the Countess.

"He was always a martial-looking man, and laid out, he was quite imposing. I declare, I cried so, as it reminded me of when I couldn't have him, for he had nothing but his legs and arms—and I married Wishaw. But it's a comfort to think I have been of some service to dear, dear Mel! for Wishaw's a man of accounts and payments, and I knew Mel had cloth from him, and," the lady suggested bills delayed, with two or three nods, "you know! and I'll do *my* best for his son."

"You are kind," said the Countess, smiling internally at the vulgar creature's misconception of Evan's requirements.

"Did he ever talk much about Mary Fence?" asked Mrs. Wishaw. "Polly Fence, he used to say, 'Sweet Polly Fence!'"

"Oh! I think so. Frequently," observed the Countess.

Mrs. Fiske primmed her mouth. *She* had never heard the great Mel allude to the name of Fence.

The Goren-croak was heard:

“Painters have painted out ‘Melchisedec’ this afternoon. Yes,—ah! In and out—as the saying goes.”

Here was an opportunity to mortify the Countess.

Mrs. Fiske placidly remarked: “Have we the other put up in its stead? It’s shorter.”

A twinge of weakness had made Evan request that the name of Evan Harrington should not decorate the shop-front till he had turned his back on it, for a time. Mrs. Mel crushed her venomous niece.

“What have you to do with such things? Shine in your own affairs first, Ann, before you meddle with others.”

Relieved at hearing that ‘Melchisedec’ was painted out, and unsuspecting of the announcement that should replace it, the Countess asked Mrs. Wishaw if she thought Evan like her dear Papa.

“So like,” returned the lady, “that I would not be alone with him yet, for worlds. I should expect him to be making love to me: for, you know, my dear—I *must* be familiar—Mel never could be alone with you, without!—It was his nature. I speak of him before marriage. But, if I can trust myself with him, I shall take charge of Mr. Evan, and show him some London society.”

“That is indeed kind,” said the Countess, glad

of a thick veil for the utterance of her contempt. "Evan, though—I fear—will be rather engaged. His friends, the Jocelyns of Beckley Court, will—I fear—hardly dispense with him: and Lady Splenders—you know her? the Marchioness of Splenders? No?—by repute, at least: a most beautiful and most fascinating woman; report of him alone has induced her to say that Evan must and shall form a part of her autumnal gathering at Splenders Castle. And how he is to get out of it, I cannot tell. But I am sure his multitudinous engagements will not prevent his paying due court to Mistress Wishaw."

As the Countess intended, Mistress Wishaw's vanity was reprov'd, and her ambition excited: a pretty double-stroke, only possible to dexterous players.

The lady rejoined that she hoped so, she was sure; and forthwith (because she suddenly seemed to possess him more than his son), launched upon Mel's incomparable personal attractions. This caused the Countess to enlarge upon Evan's vast personal prospects. They talked across each other a little, till the Countess remembered her breeding, allowed Mrs. Wishaw to run to an end in hollow exclamations, and put a finish to the undeclared controversy, by a traverse of speech, as if she were taking up the most important subject of their late colloquy. "But Evan is not

in his own hands—he is in the hands of a lovely young woman, I must tell you. He belongs to her, and not to us. You have heard of Rose Jocelyn, the celebrated heiress?”

“Engaged?” Mrs. Wishaw whispered aloud.

The Countess, an adept in the lie implied—practised by her, that she might not subject herself to future punishment (in which she was so devout a believer, that she condemned whole hosts to it), deeply smiled.

“Really!” said Mrs. Wishaw, and was about to inquire why Evan, with these brilliant expectations, could think of trade and tailoring, when the young man, whose forehead had been growing black, jumped up, and quitted them; thus breaking the harmony of the table; and as the Countess had said enough, she turned the conversation to the always welcome theme of low society. She broached death and corpses; and became extremely interesting, and very sympathetic: the only difference between the ghostly anecdotes she related, and those of the other ladies, being that her ghosts were all of them titled, and walked mostly under the burden of a coronet. For instance, there was the Portuguese Marquis de Col. He had married a Spanish wife, whose end was mysterious. Undressing, on the night of the anniversary of her death, and on the point of getting into bed, he beheld the dead woman

lying on her back before him. All night long he had to sleep with this freezing phantom! Regularly, every fresh anniversary, he had to endure the same penance, no matter where he might be, or in what strange bed. On one occasion, when he took the live for the dead, a curious thing occurred, which the Countess scrupled less to relate than would men to hint at. Ghosts were the one childish enjoyment Mrs. Mel allowed herself, and she listened to her daughter intently, ready to cap any narrative; but Mrs. Fiske stopped the flood.

“You have improved on Peter Smithers, Louisa,” she said.

The Countess turned to her mildly.

“You are certainly thinking of Peter Smithers,” Mrs. Fiske continued, bracing her shoulders. “Surely, you remember poor Peter, Louisa? An old flame of your own! He was going to kill himself, but married a Devonshire woman, and they had disagreeables, and *she* died, and *he* was undressing, and saw her there in the bed, and wouldn’t get into it, and had the mattress, and the curtains, and the counterpanes, and everything burnt. He told us it himself. You must remember it, Louisa?”

The Countess remembered nothing of the sort. No doubt could exist of its having been the Portuguese Marquis de Col, because he had confided

to her the whole affair, and indeed come to her, as his habit was, to ask her what he could possibly do, under the circumstances. If Mrs. Fiske's friend, who married the Devonshire person, had seen the same thing, the coincidence was yet more extraordinary than the case. Mrs. Fiske said, it assuredly was, and glanced at her aunt, who, as the Countess now rose, declaring she must speak to Evan, chid Mrs. Fiske, and wished her and Peter Smithers at the bottom of the sea.

"No, no, Mama," said the Countess, laughing, "that would hardly be proper," and before Mrs. Fiske could reply, escaped to complain to Evan of the vulgarity of those women.

She was not prepared for the burst of wrath with which Evan met her.

"Louisa," said he, taking her wrist sternly, "you have done a thing I can't forgive. I find it hard to bear disgrace myself: I will not consent to bring it upon others. Why did you dare to couple Miss Jocelyn's name with mine?"

The Countess gave him out her arm's length. "Speak on, Van," she said, admiring him with a bright gaze.

"Answer me, Louisa; and don't take me for a fool any more," he pursued. "You have coupled Miss Jocelyn's name with mine, in company, and I insist now upon your giving me your promise to

abstain from doing it anywhere, before anybody."

"If she saw you at this instant, Van," returned the incorrigible Countess, "would she desire it, think you? Oh! I must make you angry before her, I see that! You have your father's frown. You surpass him, for your delivery is more correct, and equally fluent. And if a woman is momentarily melted by softness in a man, she is for ever subdued by boldness and bravery of mien."

Evan dropped her hand. "Miss Jocelyn has done me the honour to call me her friend. That was in other days." His lip quivered. "I shall not see Miss Jocelyn again. Yes; I would lay down my life for her; but that's idle talk. No such chance will ever come to me. But I can save her from being spoken of in alliance with me, and what I am, and I tell you, Louisa, I will not have it." Saying which, and while he looked harshly at her, wounded pride bled through his eyes.

She was touched. "Sit down, dear; I must explain to you, and make you happy against your will," she said, in another voice, and an English accent. "The mischief is done, Van. If you do not want Rose Jocelyn to love you, you must undo it in your own way. I am not easily deceived. On the morning I went to her house in

town, she took me aside, and spoke to me. Not a confession in words. The blood in her cheeks, when I mentioned you, did that for her. Everything about you she must know—how you bore your grief, and all. And not in her usual free manner, but timidly, as if she feared a surprise, or feared to be wakened to the secret in her bosom she half suspects. ‘Tell him!’ she said, ‘I hope he will not forget me.’”

The Countess was interrupted by a great sob; for the picture of frank Rose Jocelyn changed, and soft, and, as it were, shadowed under a veil of bashful regard for him, so filled the young man with sorrowful tenderness, that he trembled, and was as a child.

Marking the impression she had produced on him, and having worn off that which he had produced on her, the Countess resumed the art in her style of speech, easier to her than nature.

“So the sweetest of Roses may be yours, dear Van; and you have her in a gold setting, to wear on your heart. Are you not enviable? I will not—no, I will not tell you she is perfect. I must fashion the sweet young creature. Though I am very ready to admit that she is much improved by this—shall I call it, desired consummation?”

Evan could listen no more. Such a struggle was rising in his breast: the effort to quench

what the Countess had so fiercely kindled; passionate desire to look on Rose but for one lightning flash: desire to look on her, and muffled sense of shame twin-born with it: wild love and leaden misery mixed: dead hopelessness and vivid hope. Up to the neck in Purgatory, but his soul saturated with visions of Bliss! The fair orb of Love was all that was wanted to complete his planetary state, and aloft it sprang, showing many faint, fair tracts to him, and piling huge darknesses.

As if in search of something, he suddenly went from the room.

“I have intoxicated the poor boy,” said the Countess, and consulted an attitude by the evening light in a mirror. Approving the result, she rang for her mother, and sat with her till dark; telling her she could not and would not leave her dear Mama that night. At the supper-table Evan did not appear, and Mr. Goren, after taking counsel of Mrs. Mel, dispersed the news that Evan was off to London. On the road again, with a purse just as ill furnished, and in his breast the light that sometimes leads gentlemen, as well as ladies, astray.

CHAPTER X.

MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD AGAIN.

NEAR a milestone, under the moonlight, crouched the figure of a woman, huddled with her head against her knees, and careless hair falling to the summer's dust. Evan came upon this sight within a few miles of Fallowfield. At first he was rather startled, for he had inherited superstitious emotions from his mother, and the road was lone, the moon full. He went up to her and spoke a gentle word, which provoked no reply. He ventured to put his hand on her shoulder, continuing softly to address her. She was flesh and blood. Evan stooped his head to catch a whisper from her mouth, but nothing save a heavier fall of the breath she took, as of one painfully waking, was heard.

A misery beyond our own is a wholesome picture for youth, and though we may not for the moment compare the deep with the lower deep, we, if we have a heart for outer sorrows, can forget ourselves in it. Evan had just been accusing the heavens of conspiracy to disgrace him. Those patient heavens had listened, as is their

wont. They had viewed and had not been disordered by his mental frenzies. It is certainly hard that they do not come down to us, and condescend to tell us what they mean, and be dumfounded by the perspicuity of our arguments—the argument, for instance, that they have not fashioned us for the science of the shears, and do yet impel us to wield them. Nevertheless, they to whom mortal life has ceased to be a long matter perceive that our appeals for conviction are answered,—now and then very closely upon the call. When we have cast off the scales of hope and fancy, and surrender our claims on mad chance: when the wild particles of this universe consent to march as they are directed, it is given them to see—if they see at all—that some plan is working out: that the heavens, icy as they are to the pangs of our blood, have been throughout speaking to our souls; and, according to the strength there existing, we learn to comprehend them. But their language is an element of Time, whom primarily we have to know. Thus a gray tailor (for in our noble days we may suppose such a person gifted with that to which they address themselves),—a tailor in the flourishing of the almond-tree, who looks back on a period when he summoned the bright heavens to consider his indignant protest against the career they have marked out for him; does he not hear

huge shouts of laughter echoing round and round the blue ethereal dome? Yet they listened, and silently!

Evan Harrington was young. He wished not to clothe the generation. What was to the remainder of the exiled sons of Adam simply the brand of expulsion from Paradise, was to him hell. In his agony, anything less than an angel, soft-voiced in his path, would not have satisfied the poor boy, and here was this wretched outcast, and instead of being relieved, he was to act the reliever!

Striving to rouse the desolate creature, he shook her slightly. She now raised her head with a slow, gradual motion, like that of a wax-work, showing a white young face, tearless,—dreadfully drawn at the lips. After gazing at him, she turned her head mechanically towards her shoulder, as to ask him why he touched her. He withdrew his hand saying:

“Why are you here? Pardon me; I want, if possible, to help you.”

A light sprang in her eyes. She jumped from the stone, and ran forward a step or two, with a gasp:

“Oh, my God! I want to go and drown myself.”

Evan lingered behind her till he saw her body sway, and in a fit of trembling she half fell on his

outstretched arm. He led her to the stone, not knowing what on earth to do with her. There was no sign of a house near; they were quite solitary; to all his questions she gave an unintelligible moan. He had not heart to leave her, so, taking a sharp seat on a heap of flints, thus possibly furnishing future occupation for one of his craftsmen, he waited, and amused himself by marking out diagrams with his stick in the thick dust.

His thoughts were far away, when he heard, faintly uttered:

“Why do you stop here?”

“To help you.”

“Please don’t. Let me be. I can’t be helped.”

“My good creature,” said Evan, “it’s quite impossible that I should leave you in this state. Tell me where you were going when your illness seized you?”

“I was going,” she commenced vacantly, “to the sea—the water,” she added, with a shivering lip.

The foolish youth asked her if she could be cold on such a night.

“No, I’m not cold,” she replied, drawing closer over her lap the ends of a shawl which would in that period have been thought rather gaudy for her station.

“You were going to Lymport?”

“Yes,—Lymport’s nearest, I think.”

“And why were you out travelling at this hour?”

She dropped her head, and began rocking to right and left.

While they talked the noise of waggon-wheels was heard approaching. Evan went into the middle of the road and beheld a covered waggon, and a fellow whom he advanced to meet, plodding a little to the rear of the horses. He proved kindly. He was a farmer’s man, he said, and was at that moment employed in removing the furniture of the farmer’s son, who had failed as a corn-chandler in Lymport, to Hillford, which he expected to reach about morn. He answered Evan’s request that he would afford the young woman conveyance as far as Fallowfield:

“Tak’ her in? That I will.”

“*She* won’t hurt the harses,” he pursued, pointing his whip at the vehicle: “there’s my mat’, Garge Stoakes, he’s in ther’, snorin’ his turn. Can’t you hear’n a-snorin’ through the wheels? I can; I’ve been laughin’! He do snore that loud—Garge do!”

Proceeding to inform Evan how George Stokes had snored in that characteristic manner from boyhood, ever since he and George had slept in a hayloft together; and how he, kept wakeful and driven to distraction by George Stokes’ nose, had

been occasionally compelled, in sheer self-defence, madly to start up and hold that pertinacious alarum in tight compression between thumb and forefinger; and how George Stokes, thus severely handled, had burst his hold with a tremendous snort, as big as a bull, and had invariably uttered the exclamation, "Hulloa!—same to you, my lad!" and rolled over to snore as fresh as ever;—all this with singular rustic comparisons, racy of the soil, and in raw Hampshire dialect, the waggoner came to a halt opposite the stone, and, while Evan strode to assist the girl, addressed himself to the great task of arousing the sturdy sleeper and quieting his trumpet, heard by all ears now that the accompaniment of the wheels was at an end.

George, violently awakened, complained that it was before his time, to which he was true; and was for going off again with exalted contentment, though his heels had been tugged, and were dangling some length out of the machine; but his comrade, with a determined blow of the lungs, gave another valiant pull, and George Stokes was on his legs, marvelling at the world and man. Evan had less difficulty with the girl. She rose to meet him, put up her arms for him to clasp her waist, whispering sharply on an inward breath: "What are you going to do with me?" and indifferent to his verbal response, trustingly

yielded her limbs to his guidance. He could see blood on her bitten underlip, as, with the help of the waggoner, he lifted her on the mattress, backed by a portly bundle, which the sagacity of Mr. Stokes had selected from his couch.

The waggoner cracked his whip, laughing at George Stokes, who yawned and settled into a composed plough-swing, without asking questions; apparently resolved to finish his nap on his legs.

“Warn’t he like that Myzepper chap, I see at the succus, bound athert gray mare!” chuckled the waggoner. “So he’d ’a gone on, had ye ’a let’n. No wulves waddn’t wake Garge till he’d slept it out. Then he’d say, ‘marnin’!’ to ’m. Are ye ’wake now, Garge?”

The admirable sleeper preferred to be a quiet butt, and the waggoner leisurely exhausted the fun that was to be had out of him; returning to it with a persistency that evinced more concentration than variety in his mind. At last Evan said: “Your pace is rather slow. They’ll be shut up in Fallowfield. I’ll go on ahead. You’ll find me at one of the inns—the Green Dragon.”

In return for this speech, the waggoner favoured him with a stare, followed by the exclamation:

“Oh, no! dang that!”

“Why, what’s the matter?” quoth Evan.

“You en’t goin’ to be off, for to leave me and Garge in the lurch there, with that ther’ young

woman, in that ther' pickle!" returned the waggoner.

Evan made an appeal to his reason, but finding that impregnable, he pulled out his scanty purse to guarantee his sincerity with an offer of pledge-money. The waggoner waived it aside. He wanted no money, he said.

"Look heer," he went on; "if you're for a start, I tells ye plain, I chucks that ther' young woman int' the road."

Evan bade him not to be a brute.

"Nack and crop!" the waggoner doggedly ejaculated.

Very much surprised that a fellow who appeared sound at heart, should threaten to behave so basely, Evan asked an explanation: upon which the waggoner demanded to know what he had eyes for: and as this query failed to enlighten the youth, he let him understand that he was a man of family experience, and that it was easy to tell at a glance that the complaint the young woman laboured under was one common to the daughters of Eve. He added that, should an emergency arise, he, though a family man, would be useless: that he always vacated the premises while those incidental scenes were being enacted at home; and that for him and George Stokes to be left alone with the young woman, why they would be of no more service to her than a couple

of babies new-born themselves. He, for his part, he assured Evan, should take to his heels, and relinquish waggon, and horses, and all; while George probably would stand and gape; and the end of it would be, they would all be had up for murder. He diverged from the alarming prospect, by a renewal of the foregoing alternative to the gentleman who had constituted himself the young woman's protector. If he parted company with them, they would immediately part company with the young woman, whose condition was evident.

"Why, couldn't you tall that?" said the waggoner, as Evan, tingling at the ears, remained silent.

"*I know nothing of such things,*" he answered, hastily, like one hurt.

I have to repeat the statement, that he was a youth, and a modest one. He felt unaccountably, unreasonably, but horribly, ashamed. The thought of his actual position swamped the sickening disgust at tailordom. Worse, then, might happen to us in this extraordinary world! There was something more abhorrent than sitting with one's legs crossed, publicly stitching, and scoffed at! He called vehemently to the waggoner to whip the horses, and hurry a-head into Fallowfield; but that worthy, whatever might be his dire alarms, had a regular pace, that was conscious of no spur:

the reply of "All right!" satisfied him at least; and Evan's chaste sighs for the appearance of an assistant petticoat round a turn of the road, were offered up duly, to the measure of the waggoner's steps.

Suddenly the waggoner came to a halt, and said: "Blest if that Garge bain't a snorin' on his pins!"

Evan lingered by him with some curiosity, while the waggoner thumped his thigh to, "Yes he be! no he bain't!" several times, in eager hesitation.

"It's a fellow calling from the downs," said Evan.

"Ay, so!" responded the waggoner. "Dang'd if I, didn't think 'twere that Garge of our'n. Hark awhile."

At a repetition of the call, the waggoner stopped his team. After a few minutes, a man appeared panting on the bank above them, down which he ran precipitately, knocked against Evan, apologised with the little breath that remained to him, and then held his hand as to entreat a hearing. Evan thought him half-mad; the waggoner was about to imagine him the victim of a midnight assault. He undeceived them by requesting, in rather flowery terms, conveyance on the road and rest for his limbs. It being explained to him that the waggon was already occupied, he comforted

himself aloud with the reflection that it was something to be on the road again for one who had been belated, lost, and wandering over the downs for the last six hours.

“Walcome to git in, when young woman gits out,” said the waggoner. “I’ll gi’ ye my sleep on t’Hillford.”

“Thanks, worthy friend,” returned the new comer. “The state of the case is this—I’m happy to take from humankind whatsoever I can get. If this gentleman will accept of my company, and my legs hold out, all will yet be well.”

Though he did not wear a petticoat, Evan was not sorry to have him. Next to the interposition of the gods, we pray for human fellowship when we are in a mess. So he mumbled politely, dropped with him a little to the rear, and they all stepped out to the crack of the waggoner’s whip.

“Rather a slow pace,” said Evan, feeling bound to converse.

“Six hours on the downs, sir, makes it extremely suitable to me,” rejoined the stranger.

“You lost your way?”

“I did, sir. Yes; one does not court those desolate regions wittingly. I am for life and society. The embraces of Diana do not agree with my constitution. My belief—I don’t know whether you have ever thought on the point—but I don’t hesitate to say I haven’t the slightest

doubt Endymion was a madman! I go farther: I say this: that the farmer who trusted that young man with his muttons was quite as bad. And if classics there be who differ from me, and do not reserve all their sympathy for those hapless animals, I beg them to take six hours on the downs alone with the moon, and the last prospect of bread and cheese, and a chaste bed, seemingly utterly extinguished. I am cured of my romance. Of course, sir, when I say bread and cheese, I speak figuratively. Food is implied."

Evan stole a glance at his companion.

"Besides, sir," the other continued, with an inflexion of grandeur, "for a man accustomed to his hunters, it is, you will confess, somewhat unpleasant for such a man—I speak hypothetically—to be reduced to his legs to that extent that it strikes him shrewdly he will run them into stumps. Nay, who shall say but that he *is* stumped?"

The stranger laughed, as if he knew the shrewness of his joke, and questioned the moon aloud: "What sayest thou, O Queen of lunatics?"

The fair lady of the night illumined his face, like one who recognised a subject. Evan thought, too, that he knew the voice. A curious, unconscious struggle therein between native facetiousness and an attempt at dignity, appeared to Evan not unfamiliar; and the egregious failure of

ambition and triumph of the instinct, helped him to join the stranger in his mirth.

“Pardon me,” cried the latter, suddenly. “Will you favour me by turning your face to the moon?”

Evan smiled at him.

He was silent for some paces, and then cried in brave simplicity: “Won’t you give your fist to a fellow?”

It needed but a word or two further for two old schoolmates to discover one another. Evan exclaimed, “Jack Raikes! Sir John!” while he himself was addressed as “Sir Amadis, Viscount Harrington!” In which, doubtless, they revived certain traits of their earlier days, and with a brisk shaking of hands, and interrogation of countenances, caught up the years that had elapsed since they parted company.

Mr. John Raikes stood about a head under Evan. He had extremely mobile features; thick, flexible eyebrows; a loose, voluble mouth; a ridiculous figure on a dandified foot. He represented to you one who was rehearsing a part he wished to act before the world, and was not aware that he perpetually took the world into his confidence.

“Me, then, you remember,” said Jack, cordially. “You are doubtful concerning the hat and general habiliments? I regret to inform you that they

are *the same*." He gave a melo-dramatic sigh. "Yes; if there is any gratification in outliving one's hat, that gratification should be mine. In this hat, in this coat, I dined you the day before you voyaged to Lisboa's tide. Changes have since ensued. We complain not; but we do deplore. Fortune on Jack has turned her back! You might know it, if only by my regard for the nice distinctions of language. The fact is, I've spent my money. A mercurial temperament makes quicksilver of any amount of cash. Mine uncle died ere I had wooed the maiden, Pleasure, and transformed her into the hag, Experience!"

The hand of Mr. Raikes fell against his thigh with theatrical impressiveness.

"But how," said Evan—"it's the oddest thing in the world our meeting like this—how did you come here?"

"You thought me cut out for an actor—didn't you?" asked Jack.

Evan admitted that it was a common opinion at school.

"It was a horrible delusion, Harrington! My patrimony gone, naked I sought the stage—as the needle the pole. Alas! there is no needle to that pole. I was hissed off the boards of a provincial theatre, and thus you see me!"

"Why," said Evan, "you don't mean to say you have been running over the downs ever since?"

Mr. Raikes punned bitterly. "No, Harrington, not in your sense. Spare me the particulars. Ruined, the last ignominy endured, I fled from the gay vistas of the Bench—for they live who would thither lead me! and determined, the day before the yesterday—what think'st thou? why to go boldly, and offer myself as Adlatus to blessed old Cudford! Yes! a little Latin is all that remains to me, and I resolved, like the man I am, to turn *hic, hæc, hoc*, into bread and cheese, and beer. Impute nought foreign to me, in the matter of pride."

"Usher in our old school—poor old Jack!" exclaimed Evan.

"Lieutenant in the Cudford Academy!" the latter rejoined. "I walked the distance from London. I had my interview with the respected principal. He gave me of mutton nearest the bone, which, they say, is sweetest; and on sweet things you should not regale in excess. Endymion watched the sheep that bred that mutton! He gave me the thin beer of our boyhood, that I might the more soberly state my mission. That beer, my friend, was brewed by one who wished to form a study for pantomimic masks. He listened with the gravity which is all his own to the recital of my career; he pleasantly compared me to Phaëton, congratulated the river Thames at my not setting it on fire in

my rapid descent, and extended to me the three fingers of affectionate farewell. I am the victim of my antecedents !”

Mr. Raikes uttered this with a stage groan, and rapped his breast.

“So you were compelled to go to old Cudford, and he rejected you—poor Jack !” Evan interjected commiseratingly.

“Because of my antecedents, Harrington. I laid the train in boyhood that blew me up as man. I put the case to him clearly. But what’s the use of talking to an old fellow who has been among boys all his life ? All his arguments are prepositions. I told him that, as became a manly nature, I, being stripped, preferred to stand up for myself like a bare stick, rather than act the parasite—the female ivy, or the wanton hop ! I joked—he smiled. Those old cocks can’t see you’re serious through a joke. What do you think ! He reminded me of that night when you and I slipped out to hear about the prize-fight, and were led home from the pot-house in glory. Well ! I replied to him—‘Had you educated us on beer a little stiffer in quality, sir—’ ‘Yes, yes,’ says he ; ‘I see you’re the same John Raikes whom I once knew.’ I answered with a quotation : he corrected my quantity, and quoted again : I capped him. I thought I had him. ‘Glad,’ says he, ‘you bear in your head

some of the fruits of my teaching.' 'Fruits, sir,' says I, 'egad! they're more like nails than fruits; I can feel now, sir, on a portion of my person, which is anywhere but the head, your praise-worthy perseverance in knocking them in.' There was gratitude for him, but he would treat the whole affair as a joke. 'You an usher, a rearer of youth, Mr. Raikes? Oh, no! Oh, no!' That was all I could get out of him. 'Gad! he might have seen that I didn't joke with the mutton-bone. If I winced at the beer it was imperceptible. Now a man who can do that is what I call a man in earnest. But, Cudford avaunt! Here I am.'

"Yes," said Evan, suppressing a smile. "I want to know how you came here."

"Short is the tale, though long the way, friend Harrington. From Bodley is ten miles to Beckley. I walked them. From Beckley is fifteen miles to Fallowfield. Then I was traversing, when, lo! towards sweet eventide a fair horse-woman riding with her groom at her horse's heels. 'Lady, or damsel, or sweet angel,' says I, addressing her, as much out of the style of the needy as possible, 'will you condescend to direct me to Fallowfield?' 'Are you going to the match?' says she. I answered boldly that I was. 'Beckley's in,' says she, 'and you'll be in time to see them out, if you cut across the downs there.' I

lifted my hat—a desperate measure, for the brim won't bear much—but honour to women though we perish! She bowed: I cut across the downs. Ah! lovely deceiver! Had I not cut across the downs, to my ruin, once before? In fine, Harrington, old boy, I've been wandering among those downs for the last seven or eight hours. I was on the point of turning my back on the road for the twentieth time, I believe—when I heard your welcome vehicular music, and hailed you; and I ask you, isn't it luck for a fellow who hasn't got a penny in his pocket, and is as hungry as five hundred hunters, to drop on an old friend like this?"

Evan answered, briefly, "Yes."

Mr. Raikes looked at him pacing with his head bent, and immediately went behind him and came up on the further side.

"What's the matter?" said Evan, like one in a dream.

"I was only trying the other shoulder," remarked his friend.

Evan pressed his hand.

"My dear Jack! pray forgive me. I have a great deal to think about. Whatever I possess I'm happy enough to share with you. I needn't tell you that." He paused, and inquired. "Where was it you said you met the young lady?"

“In the first place, O, Amadis! I never said she was young. You’re on the scent, I see.”

“What was she like?” said Evan, with forced gentleness.

“My dear fellow! there’s not the remotest chance of our catching her now. She’s a-bed and asleep, if she’s not a naughty girl.”

“She went on to Beckley, you said?”

Jack dealt him a slap.

“Are you going to the Bar?”

“I only wanted to know,” Evan observed, meditatively progressing.

He was sure that the young lady Jack had met was his own Rose, and if Jack thought himself an unlucky fellow, Evan’s opinion of him was very different.

“Did you notice her complexion?”

This remark, feebly uttered after a profound stillness, caused Jack to explode.

“Who called you Amadis, Harrington? I meet a girl on horseback; I tell you a word or two she says, and you can’t be quiet about her. Why, she was only passably pretty—talked more like a boy than a girl—opened her mouth wide when she spoke—rather jolly teeth.”

Mr. Raikes had now said enough to paint Rose accurately to the lover’s mind, and bring contempt on his personal judgment. Nursing the fresh image of his darling in his heart’s recesses, Evan,

as they entered Fallowfield, laid the state of his purse before Jack, and earned anew the epithet of Amadis when it came to be told that the occupant of the waggon was likewise one of its pensioners.

Sleep had long held its reign in Fallowfield. Nevertheless, Mr. Raikes, though blind windows alone looked on him, and nought foreign was to be imputed to him in the matter of pride, had become exceedingly solicitous concerning his presentation to the inhabitants of that quiet little country town; and while Evan and the waggoner consulted—the former with regard to the chances of procuring beds and supper, the latter as to his prospect of beer and a comfortable riddance of the feminine burden weighing on them all, Mr. Raikes was engaged in persuading his hat to assume something of the gentlemanly polish of its youth, and might have been observed now and then furtively catching up a leg to be dusted. Ere the wheels of the waggon stopped he had gained that ease of mind which the knowledge that you have done all that man may do and circumstances warrant, establishes. Capacities conscious of their limits may repose even proudly when they reach them; and, if Mr. Raikes had not quite the air of one come out of a bandbox, he at least proved to the discerning intelligence that he knew what sort of manner befitted that happy occasion, and was

enabled by the pains he had taken to glance with a cheerful challenge at the sign of the hostelry, under which they were now ranked, and from which, though the hour was late, and Fallowfield a singularly somnolent little town, there issued signs of life approaching to festivity.

CHAPTER XI.

DOINGS AT AN INN.

WHAT every traveller sighs to find, was palatably furnished by the Green Dragon of Fallowfield—a famous inn, and a constellation of wandering coachmen. There pleasant smiles seasoned plenty, and the bill was gilded in a manner unknown to our days. Whoso drank of the ale of the Green Dragon kept in his memory a place apart for it. The secret that to give a warm welcome is the breath of life to an inn was one the Green Dragon boasted, even then, not to share with many Red Lions, or Cocks of the Morning, or Kings' Heads, or other fabulous monsters; and as if to show that when you are in the right track you are sure to be seconded, there was a friend of the Green Dragon, who, on a particular night of the year, caused its renown to enlarge to the dimensions of a miracle. But that, for the moment, is my secret.

Evan and Jack were met in the passage by a chambermaid. Before either of them could speak, she had turned and fled, with the words:

“More coming!” which, with the addition of

“My goodness me!” were echoed by the hostess in her recess. Hurried directions seemed to be consequent, and then the hostess sallied out, and said, with a curtsy :

“Please to step in, gentlemen. This is the room, to-night.”

Evan lifted his hat ; and bowing, requested to know whether they could have a supper and beds.

“Beds, sir !” cried the hostess. “What *am* I to do for beds ! Yes, beds indeed you may have, but *bed-rooms*—if you ask for them, it really is more than I can supply you with. I have given up my own. I sleep with my maid Jane to-night.”

“Anything will do for us, madam,” replied Evan, renewing his foreign courtesy. “But there is a poor young woman outside.”

“Another !” the hostess instantly smiled down the inhospitable outcry.

“She,” said Evan, “must have a room to herself. She is ill.”

“Must is must, sir,” returned the gracious hostess. “But I really haven’t the means.”

“You have bed-rooms, madam ? ”

“Every one of them engaged, sir.”

“By ladies, madam ? ”

“Lord forbid, sir !” she exclaimed with the honest energy of a woman who knew her sex.

Evan bade Jack go and assist the waggoner to bring in the girl. Jack, who had been all the time pulling at his wristbands, and settling his coat-collar by the dim reflection of a window of the bar, departed, after, on his own authority, assuring the hostess that fever was not the young woman's malady, as she protested against admitting fever into her house, seeing that she had to consider her guests.

"We're open to all the world to-night, except fever," said the hostess. "Yes," she rejoined to Evan's order that the waggoner and his mate should be supplied with ale, "they shall have as much as they can drink," which is not a speech usual at inns, when one man gives an order for others, but Evan passed it by, and politely begged to be shown in to one of the gentlemen who had engaged bed-rooms.

"Oh! if you can persuade any of them, sir, I'm sure I've nothing to say," observed the hostess. "Pray don't ask me to stand by and back it, that's all."

Had Evan been familiar with the Green Dragon, he would have noticed that the landlady, its presiding genius, was stiffer than usual; the rosy smile was more constrained, as if a great host had to be embraced, and were trying it to the utmost stretch. There was, however, no asperity about her, and when she had led him to

the door he was to enter to prefer his suit, and she had asked whether the young woman was quite common, and he had replied that he had picked her up on the road, and that she was certainly poor, the hostess said :

“I’m sure you’re a very good gentleman, sir, and if I could spare your asking at all, I would.”

With that she went back to encounter Mr. Raikes and his charge, and prime the waggoner and his mate.

A noise of laughter and talk was stilled gradually, as Evan made his bow into a spacious room, wherein, as the tops of pines are seen swimming on the morning mist, about a couple of dozen guests of divers conditions sat partially revealed through wavy clouds of tobacco-smoke. By their postures, which Evan’s appearance by no means disconcerted, you read in a glance men who had been at ease for so many hours that they had no troubles in the world save the two ultimate perplexities of the British Sybarite, whose bed of roses is harassed by the pair of problems : first, what to do with his legs ; secondly, how to imbibe liquor with the slightest possible derangement of those members subordinate to his upper structure. Of old the Sybarite complained. Not so our self-helpful islanders. Since they could not, now that work was done

and jollity the game, take off their legs (a mechanical contrivance overlooked by Nature, who should have made Britons like the rest of her children in all things, if unable to suit us in all), they got away from them as far as they might, in fashions original or imitative: some by thrusting them out at full length; some by cramping them under their chairs: while some, taking refuge in a mental effort, forgot them, a process to be recommended if it did not involve occasional pangs of consciousness to the legs of their neighbours. We see in our cousins West of the great water, who are said to exaggerate our peculiarities, beings labouring under the same difficulty, and intent on its solution. As to the second problem: that of drinking without discomposure to the subservient limbs: the company present worked out this republican principle ingeniously, but in a manner beneath the attention of the Muse. Let Clio record that mugs and glasses, tobacco and pipes, were strewn upon the table. But if the guests had arrived at that stage when to reach the arm, or arrange the person, for a sip of good stuff, causes moral debates, and presents to the mind impediments equal to what would be raised in active men by the prospect of a great excursion, it is not to be wondered at that the presence of a stranger produced no immediate commotion. Two or

three heads were half turned ; such as faced him imperceptibly lifted their eyelids.

“Good evening, sir,” said one who sat as chairman, with a decisive nod.

“Good night, ain’t it ?” a jolly-looking old fellow queried of the speaker, in an under-voice.

“’Gad, you don’t expect me to be wishing the gentleman good-bye, do you ?” retorted the former.

“Ha! ha! No, to be sure,” answered the old boy ; and the remark was variously uttered, that “Good night,” by a caprice of our language, did sound like it.

“Good evening’s ‘How d’ye do?’—‘How are ye?’ Good night’s ‘Be off, and be blowed to you,’” observed an interpreter with a positive mind ; and another, whose intelligence was not so clear, but whose perceptions had seized the point, exclaimed : “I never says it when I hails a chap ; but, dash my buttons, if I mightn’t ‘a done, one day or another ! Queer !”

The chairman, warmed by his joke, added, with a sharp wink : “Ay ; it would be queer, if you hailed ‘Good night’ in the middle of the day !” and this among a company soaked in ripe ale, could not fail to run the electric circle, and persuaded several to change their positions ; in the rumble of which, Evan’s reply, if he made any, was lost. Few, however, were there who

could think of him, and ponder on that glimpse of fun, at the same time; and he would have been passed over, had not the chairman said: "Take a seat, sir; make yourself comfortable."

"Before I have that pleasure," replied Evan, "I—"

"*I see where 'tis,*" burst out the old boy who had previously superinduced a diversion: "he's going to ax if he can't have a bed!"

A roar of laughter, and "Don't you remember this day last year?" followed the cunning guess. For awhile explication was impossible; and Evan coloured, and smiled, and waited for them.

"I was going to ask—"

"Said so!" shouted the old boy, gleefully.

"—one of the gentlemen who has engaged a bed-room to do me the extreme favour to step aside with me, and allow me a moment's speech with him."

Long faces were drawn, and odd stares were directed towards him, in reply.

"*I see where 'tis;*" the old boy thumped his knee. "Ain't it now? Speak up, sir! There's a lady in the case?"

"I may tell you thus much," answered Evan, "that it is an unfortunate young woman, very ill, who needs rest and quiet."

"Didn't I say so?" shouted the old boy.

But this time, though his jolly red jowl turned

all round to demand a confirmation, it was not generally considered that he had divined so correctly. Between a lady and an unfortunate young woman, there seemed to be a strong distinction, in the minds of the company.

The chairman was the most affected by the communication. His bushy eyebrows frowned at Evan, and he began tugging at the brass buttons of his coat, like one preparing to arm for a conflict.

“Speak out, sir, if you please,” he said. “Above board—no asides—no taking advantages. You want me to give up my bed-room for the use of your young woman, sir?”

Evan replied quietly: “She is a stranger to me; and if you could see her, sir, and know her situation, I think she would move your pity.”

“I don’t doubt it, sir—I don’t doubt it,” returned the chairman. “They all move our pity. That’s how they get over us. She has diddled you, and she would diddle me, and diddle us all—diddle the devil, I dare say, when her time comes. I don’t doubt it, sir.”

To confront a vehement old gentleman, sitting as president in an assembly of satellites, requires some command of countenance, and Evan was not browbeaten: he held him, and the whole room, from where he stood, under a serene and serious eye, for his feelings were too deeply stirred on

behalf of the girl to let him think of himself. That question of hers, "What are you going to do with me?" implying such helplessness and trust, was still sharp on his nerves.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I humbly beg your pardon for disturbing you as I do."

But with a sudden idea that a general address on behalf of a particular demand must necessarily fail, he let his eyes rest on one there, whose face was neither stupid nor repellent, and who, though he did not look up, had an attentive, thoughtful cast about the mouth.

"May I entreat a word apart with you, sir?"

Evan was not mistaken in the index he had perused. The gentleman seemed to feel that he was selected from the company, and, slightly raising his head, carelessly replied: "My bed is entirely at your disposal," resuming his contemplative pose.

On the point of thanking him, Evan advanced a step, when up started the irascible chairman.

"I don't permit it! I won't allow it!" And before Evan could ask his reasons, he had rung the bell, muttering: "They follow us to our inns, now, the baggages! They must harry us at our inns! We can't have peace and quiet at our inns!"

In a state of combustion, he cried out to the waiter: "Here, Mark, this gentleman has brought

in a dirty wench: pack her up to my bed-room, and lock her in: lock her in, and bring down the key."

Agreeably deceived in the old gentleman's intentions, Evan could not refrain from joining the murmured hilarity created by the conclusion of his order. The latter glared at him, and added: "Now, sir, you've done your worst. Sit down, and be merry."

Replying that he had a friend outside, and would not fail to accept the invitation, Evan retired. He was met by the hostess with the reproachful declaration on her lips, that she was a widow woman, wise in appearances, and that he had brought into her house that night work she did not expect, or bargain for. Rather (since I must speak truth of my gentleman) to silence her on the subject, and save his ears, than to propitiate her favour towards the girl, Evan drew out his constitutionally lean purse, and dropped it in her hand, praying her to put every expense incurred to his charge. She exclaimed: "If Dr. Pillie has his full sleep this night, I shall be astonished;" and Evan hastily led Jack into the passage to impart to him, that the extent of his resources was reduced to three shillings and a few pence. Jack made a wry face, but regained his equanimity, saying: "Well, we can't be knights of chivalry and aldermen too. The thing was

never known. Let me see. I've almost forgotten how to reckon. Beds, a shilling a piece—the rest for provender. To-morrow we die. That's a consolation to the stumped! Come along, Harrington; let us look like men who have had pounds in their pockets!"

Mr. Raikes assumed the braver features of this representation, and marched into the room without taking off his hat, which was a part of his confidence in company. He took his seat at a small table, and began to whistle. His demeanour signified: "I am equal to any of you." His thoughts were: "How shall I prove it upon three shillings?"

"I see you're in mourning as well as myself, Jack," said Evan, calling attention to his hat.

Mr. Raikes did not displace it, as he replied, "Yes," with the pre-occupied air of a man who would be weeping the past had he not to study the present.

Eyes were on him, he could feel. It appeared to him that the company awaited his proceedings; why they should he did not consider; but the sense of it led him to stalk with affected gravity to the bell, which he rang consequentially; and, telling Evan to leave the ordering to him, sat erect, and scanned the measure and quality of the stuff in the glasses.

"Mind you never mention about my applying

to old Cudford," he whispered to Evan, hurriedly. "Shouldn't like it known, you know—one's family!—Here, waiter!"

Mark, the waiter, scudded past, and stopped before the chairman to say: "If you please, sir, the gentlemen up-stairs send their compliments, and will be happy to accept."

"Ha!" was the answer. "Thought better of it, have they! Lay for three more, then. Pretty nearly ready?"

"It will be another twenty minutes, sir."

"Oh, attend to that gentleman, then."

Mark presented himself to the service of Mr. Raikes.

"R-r-r-r—a—" commenced Jack, "what have you got—a—that you can give a gentleman for supper, waiter?"

"Receive the gentleman's orders!" shouted the chairman to a mute interrogation from Mark, who capitulated spontaneously:

"Cold veal, cold beef, cold duck, cold—"

"Stop!" cried Mr. Raikes, "It's summer, I know; but cold, cold, cold!—really! And cold duck! Cold duck and old peas, I suppose! I don't want to come the epicure exactly, in the country. One must take what one can get, I know that. But some nice little bit to captivate the appetite?"

Mark suggested a rarebit.

Mr. Raikes shook his head with melancholy.

“Can you let us have some Maintenon cutlets, waiter?—or Soubise?—I ask for some dressing, that’s all—something to make a man eat.” He repeated to Evan: “Maintenon? Soubise?” whispering: “Anything will do!”

“I think you had better order bread and cheese,” said Evan, meaningly, in the same tone.

“You think, on the whole, you prefer Soubise?” cried Jack. “Very well. But can we have it? These out-of-the-way places—we must be modest! Now, I’ll wager you don’t know how to make an omelette here, waiter? Plain English cookery, of course!”

“Our cook *has* made ’em, sir,” said Mark.

“Oh, that’s quite enough!” returned Jack. “Oh, dear me! *Has* made an omelette! That doesn’t by any means sound cheerful.”

Jack was successful in the effect he intended to produce on the company. The greater number of the sons of Britain present gazed at him with the respectful antagonism peculiar to them when they hear foreign words, the familiarity with which appears to imply wealth and distinction.

“Chippolata pudding, of course, is out of the question,” he resumed. “Fish one can’t ask for. Vain were the call! A composition of eggs, flour, and butter we dare not trust. What are we to do?”

Before Evan could again recommend bread and cheese, the chairman had asked Mr. Raikes whether he really liked cutlets for supper; and, upon Jack replying that they were a favourite dish, sung out to Mark: "Cutlets for two!" and in an instant Mark had left the room, and the friends found themselves staring at one another.

"There's three shillings at a blow!" hissed Jack, now taking off his hat, as if to free his distressed mind.

Evan, red in the face, reproached him for his folly. Jack comforted him with the assurance that they were in for it, and might as well comport themselves with dignity till the time for payment.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Evan, getting up to summon Mark afresh. "I shall sup on bread and cheese."

"My lord! my lord!" cried Jack, laying hold of his arm, and appearing to forget some private necessity for an incognito.

"Well," he added, as the bell rang, "perhaps at this late hour we ought to consider the house. We should bear in mind that a cook, however divine in bounties, is mortal, like the rest of us. We are not at Trianon. I'm not the Abbé Dubois, nor you the Duc d'Orleans. Since they won't let us cook for ourselves, which I hold that all born gentlemen are bound to be able to do, we'll e'en content ourselves with modest fare."

“My good Jack,” said Evan, less discreetly than it pleased his friend to hear, “haven’t you done playing at ‘lords’ yet? It was fun when we were boys at school. But, let me tell you, you don’t look a bit like a lord.”

“I’m the son of a gentleman,” returned Jack, angrily.

“I’m sorry to find yourself compelled to tell everybody of it,” said Evan, touched by a nettle.

“But what’s the use of singing small before these fellows?” Jack inquired.

The chairman was doubled in his seat with laughter. Among a portion of the guests there had been a return to common talk, and one had observed that he could not get that “Good Evening,” and “Good Night,” out of his head: which had caused a friend to explain the meaning of these terms of salutation to him: while another, of a philosophic turn, pursued the theme: “Ye see, when we meets, we makes a night *of* it. So, when we parts, it’s Good Night—natural! ain’t it?” A proposition assented to, and considerably dilated on; but whether he was laughing at that, or what had aroused the fit, the chairman did not say. Evan countermanded the cutlets, and substituted an order for bread and cheese, Jack adding, with the nod of a patron to the waiter:

“We think—since it’s late—we won’t give you the trouble to-night. We’ll try the effect of bread

and cheese for once in a way. Nothing like new sensations!"

At this the chairman fell right forward, grasping the arms of his chair, and shouting.

Jack unconsciously put on his hat, for when you have not the key to current laughter—and especially when you are acting a part, and acting it, as you think, with admirable truth to nature—it has a hostile sound, and suggests devilries.

The lighter music of mirth had succeeded the chairman's big bursts, by the time the bread and cheese appeared.

In the rear of the provision came three young gentlemen, of whom the foremost lumped in, singing to one behind him,—“And you shall have little Rosey!”

They were clad in cricketing costume, and exhibited the health and manners of youthful Englishmen of station. Frolicsome young bulls bursting on an assemblage of sheep, they might be compared to. The chairman welcomed them a trifle snubbingly. The colour mounted to the cheeks of Mr. Raikes as he made incision in the cheese, under their eyes, knitting his brows fearfully, as if at hard work.

“What a place!” he muttered. “Nothing but bread and cheese! Well! We must make the best of it. Content ourselves with beer, too!”

A drink corrupted into a likeness of wine! Due to our Teutonic ancestry, no doubt. Let fancy beguile us!" And Mr. Raikes, with a grand air of good-nature, and the lofty mind that makes the best of difficulties, offered Evan a morsel of cheese, saying: "We dispense with soup. We commence with the entrées. May I press a patty upon you."

"Thank you," said Evan, smiling, and holding out his plate.

"Yes, yes; I understand you," continued Mr. Raikes. "We eat, and eke we swear. We'll be avenged for this. In the interim let sweet fancy beguile us!"

Before helping himself, a thought appeared to strike him. He got up hastily, and summoned Mark afresh.

"R-r-r-r—a—what are the wines here, waiter?" he demanded to know.

It was a final effort at dignity and rejection of the status to which, as he presumed, the sight of a gentleman, or the son of one, pasturing on plain cheese, degraded him. It was also Jack's way of repelling the tone of insolent superiority in the bearing of the three young cricketers.

"What are the wines in this establishment?" he repeated peremptorily, for Mark stood smoothing his mouth, as if he would have enjoyed the liberty of a grin.

“Port,—sir,—sherry.”

“Ah—the old story,” returned Mr. Raikes.
“Dear! dear! dear!”

“Perhaps, sir,” insinuated Mark, “you mean foreign wines?”

“None of your infamous home-concoctions, waiter. Port! I believe there’s no Port in the country, except in half-a-dozen private cellars—of which I know three. I do mean foreign wines.”

Now Mark had served in a good family, and in a London hotel. He cleared his throat, and mutely begging the attention of the chairman, thus volubly started: “Foreign wines, sir, yes! Rhine wines! we have Rudesham; we have Maregbrun; we have Steenbug—Joehannisbug—Libefromil—Asmyhaus, and several others. Claret!—we have Lafitte; we have Margaw; we have Rose;—’Fitte—Margaw—Rose—Julia—Bodo. *At your disposal, sir.*”

Jack, with a fiery face, blinked wildly under the torrent of vintages.

Evan answered his plaintive look: “*I shall drink ale.*”

“Then I suppose I must do the same,” said Jack, with a miserable sense of defeat and provoked humiliation. “Thank you, waiter, it goes better with cheese. A pint of ale.”

“Yes, sir,” said Mark, scorning to stop and enjoy his victory.

Heaving a sad "Heigho!" and not daring to glance at the buzzing company, Mr. Raikes cut a huge bit of crust off the loaf, and was preparing to encounter it. The melancholy voracity in his aspect was changed in a minute to surprise, for the chairman had started out of a fit of compressed merriment to arrest his hand.

"Let me offer you vengeance on the spot, sir."

"How?" cried Jack, angrily; "enigmas?"

The chairman entreated Evan to desist from the cheese; and, pulling out his watch, thundered: "Time!"

The company generally jumped on their legs; and, in the midst of a hum of talk and laughter, the chairman informed Evan and Jack, that he invited them cordially to a supper up-stairs, and would be pleased if they would partake of it, and in a great rage if they would not.

"Sir," said Jack, by this time quite recovered, "the alternative decides me. The alternative is one I should so deeply grieve to witness, that, in short, I—a—give in my personal adhesion, with thanks."

"You are not accustomed to this poor fare, sir," remarked the chairman.

"You have aptly divined the fact, sir," said Jack; "nor I, nor this, my friend. The truth is, that where cometh cheese, and nothing precedeth it, there is, to the cultivated intelligence, the

sense of a hiatus which may promote digestion, but totally at the expense of satisfaction. Man, by such means, is sunk below the level of the ruminating animal. He cheweth—”

The stentorian announcement of supper interrupted Mr. Raikes; and the latter gentleman, to whom glibness stood for greatness of manner, very well content with the effect he conceived he had produced on the company, set about persuading Evan to join the feast. For several reasons, Evan would have preferred to avoid it. He was wretched, inclined to enjoy a fit of youthful misanthropy; Jack's dramatic impersonation of the lord had disgusted him; and bread and cheese symbolled his condition. The chairman, catching indications of reluctance, stooped forward, and said: “Sir! must I put it as a positive favour?”

“Pray, do not,” replied Evan, and relinquished the table with a bow.

The door was open, and the company of jolly yeomen, tradesmen, farmers, and the like, had become intent on observing all the ceremonies of precedence: not one would broaden his back on the other; and there was bowing, and scraping, and grimacing, till Farmer Broadmead was hailed aloud, and the old boy stepped forth, and was summarily pushed through: the chairman calling from the rear, “Hulloa! no names to-night!” to

which was answered lustily: "All right, Mr. Tom!" and the speaker was reprovèd with, "There you go! at it again!" and out and up they hustled.

The chairman said quietly to Evan, as they were ascending the stairs: "We don't have names to-night: may as well drop titles." Which presented no peculiar meaning to Evan's mind, and he smiled the usual smile.

To Jack, at the door of the supper-room, the chairman repeated the same; and Jack, with extreme affability and alacrity of abnegation, rejoined, "Oh, certainly!"

No wonder that he rubbed his hands with more delight than aristocrats and people with gentlemanly connections are in the habit of betraying at the prospect of refection, for the release from bread and cheese was rendered overpoweringly glorious, in his eyes, by the bountiful contrast exhibited on the board before him.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH ALE IS SHOWN TO HAVE ONE
QUALITY OF WINE.

To proclaim that yon ribs of beef, and yonder ruddy Britons have met, is to furnish matter for an hour's comfortable meditation.

Digest the fact. Here the Fates have put their seal to something Nature clearly devised. It was intended; and it has come to pass. A thing has come to pass which we feel to be right! The machinery of the world, then, is not entirely dislocated: there is harmony, on one point, among the mysterious powers who have to do with us. Discordant as the individual may have become, the condition of the universe is vindicated by this great meeting of beef and Britons. We have here a basis. I cherish a belief that, at some future day, the speculative Teuton and experimental Gaul will make pilgrimages to this island solely to view this sight, and gather strength from it.

Apart from its eloquent and consoling philosophy, the picture is pleasant. You see two rows of shoulders resolutely set for action: heads in

divers degrees of proximity to their plates : eyes variously twinkling, or hypocritically composed : chaps in vigorous exercise. Now leans a fellow right back with his whole face to the firmament : Ale is his adoration. He sighs not till he sees the end of the mug. Now from one a laugh is sprung ; but, as if too early tapped, he turns off the cock, and serenely primes himself anew. Occupied by their own requirements, these Britons allow that their neighbours have rights : no cursing at waste of time is heard when plates have to be passed : disagreeable, it is still duty. Field-Marshal Duty, the Briton's star, shines here. If one usurps more than his allowance of elbow-room, bring your charge against them that fashioned him : work away to arrive at some compass yourself.

Now the mustard has ceased to travel, and the salt : the guests have leisure to contemplate their achievements. Laughs are more prolonged, and come from the depths.

Now Ale, which is to Beef what Eve was to Adam, threatens to take possession of the field. Happy they who, following Nature's direction, admitted not bright ale into their Paradise till their manhood was strengthened with beef. Some, impatient, had thirsted ; had satisfied their thirst ; and the ale, the light though lovely spirit,

with nothing to hold it down, had mounted to their heads; just as Eve will do when Adam is not mature: just as she did—Alas! Gratitude forbid that I should say a word against good ale! I am disinclined to say a word in disfavour of Eve. Both Ale and Eve seem to speak imperiously to the soul of man. See that they be good, see that they come in season, and we bow to the consequences.

Now, the ruins of the feast being removed, and a clear course left for the flow of ale, farmer Broadmead, facing the chairman, rises. He speaks:

“Gentlemen! ’Taint fust time you and I be met here, to salbrate this here *occasion*. I say, not fust time, not by many a time, ’taint. Well, gentlemen, I ain’t much of a speaker, gentlemen, as *you* know. Hows’ever, here I be. No denyin’ that. I’m on my legs. This here’s a strange enough world, and a man as ’s a gentleman, I say, we ought for to be glad when we got ’m. You know: I’m coming to it shortly. I ain’t much of a speaker, and if you wants somethin’ new, you must ax elsewhere: but what I say is—dang it! here’s good health and long life to Mr. Tom, up there!”

“No names!” shouts the chairman, in the midst of a tremendous clatter.

Farmer Broadmead moderately disengages his

breadth from the seat. He humbly asks pardon, which is accorded.

Ale (to Beef what Eve was to Adam), circulates beneath a dazzling foam, fair as the first woman.

Mr. Tom (for the breach of the rules in mentioning whose name on a night when identities thereon dependent are merged, we offer sincere apologies every other minute), Mr. Tom is toasted. His parents, who selected that day sixty years ago, for his bow to be made to the world, are alluded to with encomiums, and float down to posterity on floods of liquid amber.

But to see all the subtle merits that now begin to bud out from Mr. Tom, the chairman and giver of the feast ; and also rightly to appreciate the speeches, we require to be enormously charged with Ale. Mr. John Raikes did his best to keep his head above the surface of the rapid flood. He conceived the chairman in brilliant colours, and probably owing to the energy called for by his brain, the legs of the young man failed him twice, as he tried them. Attention was demanded. Mr. John Raikes addressed the meeting.

The three young gentlemen-cricketers had hitherto behaved with a certain propriety. It did not offend Mr. Raikes to see them conduct themselves as if they were at a play, and the rest of the company paid actors. He had likewise taken a position, and had been the first to laugh

aloud at a particular slip of grammar; while his shrugs at the aspirates transposed and the pronunciation prevalent, had almost established a free-masonry between him and one of the three young gentlemen-cricketers—a fair-haired youth, with a handsome reckless face, who leaned on the table, humorously eyeing the several speakers, and exchanging bye-words and laughs with his friends on each side of him.

But Mr. Raikes had the disadvantage of having come to the table empty in stomach—thirsty, exceedingly; and, I repeat that as, without experience, you are the victim of divinely-given Eve, so, with no foundation to receive it upon, are you the victim of good sound Ale. Mr. Raikes very soon lost his head. He would otherwise have seen that he must produce a wonderfully-telling speech if he was to keep the position he had taken, and had better not attempt one. The three young cricketers were hostile from the beginning. All of them leant forward, calling attention loudly, humming a roll of Rhine wines, laughing for the fun to come.

“Gentlemen!” he said; and said it twice. The gap was wide, and he said, “Gentlemen!” again.

This commencement of a speech proves that you have made the plunge, but not that you can swim. At a repetition of “Gentlemen!” expectancy resolved into cynicism.

“Gie’n a help,” sung out a son of the plough to a neighbour of the orator.

“Dang it!” murmured another, “we ain’t such gentlemen as that comes to.”

Mr. Raikes was politely requested to “tune his pipe.”

With a gloomy curiosity as to the results of Jack’s adventurous undertaking, and a touch of anger at the three whose bearing throughout had displeased him, Evan regarded his friend. He, too, had drunk, and upon emptiness. Bright ale had mounted to his brain. A hero should be held as sacred as the Grand Llama: so let no more be said than that he drank still, nor marked the replenishing of his glass.

Jack cleared his throat for a final assault: he had got an image, and was dashing off; but, unhappily, as if to make the start seem fair, he was guilty of the reiteration of “Gentlemen.”

Everybody knew that it was a real start this time, and indeed he had made an advance, and had run straight through half a sentence. It was therefore manifestly unfair, inimical, contemptuous, overbearing, and base, for one of the three young cricketers at this period to fling back weariedly and exclaim: “By jingo; too many gentlemen here!”

Evan heard him across the table. Lacking the key of the speaker’s previous conduct, the words

might have passed. As it was, they, to the ale-invaded head of a young hero, feeling himself the world's equal, and condemned nevertheless to bear through life the insignia of Tailordom, not unnaturally struck with peculiar offence. There was arrogance, too, in the young man who had interposed. He was long in the body, and, when he was not refreshing his sight by a careless contemplation of his finger-nails, looked down on his company at table, as one may do who comes from loftier studies. He had what is popularly known as the nose of our aristocracy: a nose that much culture of the external graces, and affectation of suavity, are required to soften. Thereto were joined thin lips and hot brows. Birth it was possible he could boast: hardly brains. He sat to the right of the fair-haired youth, who, with his remaining comrade, a quiet smiling fellow, appeared to be better liked by the guests, and had been hailed once or twice, under correction of the chairman, as Mr. Harry. The three had distinguished one there by a few friendly passages; and this was he who had offered his bed to Evan for the service of the girl. The recognition they extended to him did not affect him deeply. He was called Drummond, and had his place near the chairman, whose humours he seemed to relish.

Now the ears of Mr. Raikes were less keen at

the moment than Evan's, but his openness to ridicule was that of a man on his legs solus, amid a company sitting, and his sense of the same—when he saw himself the victim of it—acute. His face was rather comic, and, under the shadow of embarrassment, twitching and working for ideas—might excuse a want of steadiness and absolute gravity in the countenances of others.

“Gentlemen,” this inveterate harper resumed.

It was too much. Numerous shoulders fell against the backs of chairs, and the terrible rattle of low laughter commenced. Before it could burst overwhelmingly, Jack, with a dramatic visage, leaned over his glass, and looking, as he spoke, from man to man, asked emphatically: “Is there any person present whose conscience revolts against being involved in that denomination?”

The impertinence was at least a saving sign of wits awake. So the chairman led off, in reply to Jack, with an encouraging “Bravo!” and immediately there ensued an agricultural chorus of “Brayvos!”

Jack's readiness had thus rescued him in extremity.

He nodded and went ahead cheerily.

“I should be sorry to think so. When I said ‘Gentlemen,’ I included all. If the conscience of one *should* impeach him, or me—” Jack

eyed the lordly contemplator of his nails, on a pause, adding, "It is not so. I rejoice. I was about to observe, then, that, a stranger, I entered this hospitable establishment—I and my friend—"

"The gentleman!" their now recognised antagonist interposed, and turned his head to one of his comrades, and kept it turned—a proceeding similar in tactics to striking and running away.

"I thank my honourable—a—um! I thank the—a—whatever he may be!" continued Jack. "I accept his suggestion. My friend, the gentleman!—the real gentleman!—the true gentleman!—the undoubted gentleman!"

Further iterations, if not amplifications, of the merits of the gentleman would have followed, had not Evan, strong in his modesty, pulled Jack into his seat, and admonished him to be content with the present measure of his folly

But Jack had more in him. He rose, and flourished off: "A stranger, I think I said. What I have done to deserve to feel like an alderman I can't say; but—" (Jack, falling into perfect good-humour and sincerity, was about to confess the cordial delight his supper had given him, when his eyes met those of his antagonist superciliously set): "but," he resumed, rather to the perplexity of his hearers, "this sort of heavy fare of course accounts for it, if one is not

accustomed to it, and gives one, as it were, the civic crown, which I apprehend to imply a surcharged stomach—in the earlier stages of the entertainment. I have been at feasts, I have even given them—yes, gentlemen—” (Jack slid suddenly down the slopes of anti-climax), “you must not judge by the hat, as I see one or two here do me the favour to do. By the bye,” he added, glancing hurriedly about, “where did I clap it down when I came in?”

His antagonist gave a kick under the table, saying, with a sneer, “What’s this?”

Mr. Raikes dived below, and held up the battered decoration of his head. He returned thanks with studious politeness, the more so as he had forgotten the context of his speech, and the exact state of mind he was in when he broke from it. “Gentlemen!” again afflicted the ears of the company.

“Oh, by Jove! more gentlemen!” cried Jack’s enemy.

“No anxiety, I beg!” Jack rejoined, always brought to his senses when pricked: “I did not include you, sir.”

“Am I in your way, sir?” asked the other, hardening his under lip.

“Well, I did find it difficult, when I was a boy, to cross the Ass’s Bridge!” retorted Jack—and there was laughter.

The chairman's neighbour, Drummond, whispered him: "Laxley will get up a row with that fellow."

"It's young Jocelyn egging him on," said the chairman."

"Um!" added Drummond: "it's the friend of that talkative rascal that's dangerous, if it comes to anything."

Mr. Raikes perceived that his host desired him to conclude. So, lifting his voice and swinging his arm, he ended: "Allow me to propose to you the Fly in Amber. In other words, our excellent host embalmed in brilliant ale! Drink him! and so let him live in our memories for ever!"

Mr. Raikes sat down very well contented with himself, very little comprehended, and applauded loudly.

"The Flyin' Number!" echoed farmer Broadmead, confidently and with clamour; adding to a friend, when both had drunk the toast to the dregs, "But what number that be, or how many 'tis of 'em, dishes me! But that's ne'ther here nor there."

The chairman and host of the evening stood up to reply, welcomed by thunders, and "There ye be, Mr. Tom! glad I lives to see ye!" and "No names!" and "Long life to him!"

This having subsided, the chairman spoke, first nodding.

“You don’t want many words, and if you do, you won’t get ’em from me.”

Cries of “Got something better!” took up the blunt address.

“You’ve been true to it, most of you. I like men not to forget a custom.”

“Good reason so to be,” and “A jolly good custom,” replied to both sentences.

“As to the beef, I hope you didn’t find it tough: as to the ale—I know all about *that!*”

“Aha! good!” rang the verdict.

“All I can say is, that this day next year it will be on the table, and I hope that every one of you will meet Tom—will meet me here punctually. I’m not a Parliament man, so that’ll do—”

The chairman’s breach of his own rules drowned the termination of his speech in an uproar.

Re-seating himself, he lifted his glass, and proposed: “The Antediluvians!”

Farmer Broadmead echoed: “The Antediluvians!” appending, as a private sentiment, “And dam rum chaps they were!”

The Antediluvians, undoubtedly the toast of the evening, were enthusiastically drunk, and in an ale of treble brew.

When they had quite gone down, Mr. Raikes ventured to ask for the reason of their receiving such honour from a posterity they had so little to

do with. He put the question mildly, but was impetuously snapped at by the chairman.

“You respect men for their luck, sir, don’t you? Don’t be a hypocrite, and say you don’t—you do. Very well: so do I. That’s why I drink ‘The Antediluvians!’”

“Our worthy host here” (Drummond, gravely smiling, undertook to elucidate the case) “has a theory that the constitutions of the Postdiluvians have been deranged, and their lives shortened, by the miasmas of the Deluge. I believe he carries it so far as to say that Noah, in the light of a progenitor, is inferior to Adam, owing to the shaking he had to endure in the ark, and which he conceives to have damaged the patriarch and the nervous systems of his sons. It’s a theory, you know.”

“They lived close on a thousand years, hale, hearty—and no water!” said the chairman.

“Well!” exclaimed one, some way down the table, a young farmer, red as a cock’s comb: “no fools they, eh, master? Where there’s ale, would you drink water, my hearty?” and back he leaned to enjoy the tribute to his wit; a wit not remarkable, but nevertheless sufficient in the noise it created to excite the envy of Mr. John Raikes, who, inveterately silly when not engaged in a contest, now began to play on the names of the sons of Noah.

The chairman lanced a keen light at him from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

“Ought to have excused this humble stuff to you, sir,” he remarked. “It’s the custom. We drink ale to-night: any other night happy to offer you your choice, sir—Joehannisberg, Rudesheim, Steenberg, Libefreemilk, Asmannshauser, Lafitte, La Rose, Margaux, Bordeaux: Clarets, Rhine wines, Burgundies—drinks that men of your station are more used to.”

Mr. Raikes stammered: “Thank you, thank you; ale will do, sir—an excellent ale!”

But before long the chairman had again to call two parties to order. Mr. Raikes was engaged in a direct controversy with his enemy. In that young gentleman he had recognised one of a station above his own—even what it was in the palmy days of bank-notes and naughty suppers; and he did not intend to allow it. On the other hand, Laxley had begun to look at him very distantly over the lordly bridge of his nose. To Mr. Raikes, Laxley was a puppy: to Laxley, Mr. Raikes was a snob. The antagonism, therefore, was natural: ale did but put the match to the magazine. But previous to an explosion, Laxley, who had observed Evan’s disgust at Jack’s exhibition of himself, and had been led to think, by his conduct and clothes in conjunction, that Evan was his own equal; a gentleman con-

descending to the society of a low-born acquaintance; had sought with sundry propitiations—calm, intelligent glances, light shrugs, and such like—to divide Evan from Jack. He did this, doubtless, because he partly sympathised with Evan, and to assure him that he took a separate view of him. Probably Evan was already offended, or he held to Jack, as a comrade should, or else it was that Tailordom bellowed in his ears, every fresh minute: “Nothing assume!” I incline to think that the more ale he drank the fiercer rebel he grew against conventional ideas of rank, and those class-barriers which we scorn so vehemently when we find ourselves kicking at them. Whatsoever the reason that prompted him, he did not respond to Laxley’s advances; and Laxley, deferentially disregarding him, dealt with Jack alone.

In a tone plainly directed at Mr. Raikes, he said: “Well, Harry, tired of this? The agriculturals are good fun, but I can’t stand much of the small cockney. A blackguard who tries to make jokes out of the Scriptures ought to be kicked!”

Harry rejoined, with wet lips: “Wopping stuff, this ale! Who’s that you want to kick?”

“Somebody who objects to his bray, I suppose,” Mr. Raikes struck in, across the table, negligently thrusting out his elbow to support his head.

“Did you allude to me, sir?” Laxley inquired.

“I alluded to a donkey, sir.” Jack lifted his eyelids to the same level as Laxley’s: “a passing remark on that interesting animal.”

Laxley said nothing; but the interjection “blackguard!” was perceptible on his mouth.

“Did you allude to me, sir?” Jack inquired, in his turn.

“Would you like me to express what I think of a fellow who listens to private conversations?” was the answer.

“I should be happy to task your eloquence even to that extent, if I might indulge a hope for grammatical results,” said Jack.

Laxley thought fit to retire upon his silent superiority. His friend Harry now came into the ring to try a fall.

“Are you an usher in a school?” he asked, meaning by his looks what men of science in fisticuffs call business.

Mr. Raikes started up in amazement. He recovered as quickly.

“No, sir, not quite; but I have no doubt I should be able to instruct you upon a point or two.”

“Good manners, for instance?” remarked the third young cricketer, without disturbing his habitual smile.

“Or what comes from not observing them,” said Evan, unwilling to have Jack over-matched.

“Perhaps you’ll give me a lesson now?” Harry indicated a readiness to rise for either of them.

At this juncture the chairman interposed.

“Harmony, my lads!—harmony to-night.”

Farmer Broadmead, imagining it to be the signal for a song, returned :

“All right, Mr. — Mr. Chair! but we an’t got pipes in yet. Pipes before harmony, you know, to-night.”

The pipes were summoned forthwith. System appeared to regulate the proceedings of this particular night at the Green Dragon. The pipes charged, and those of the guests who smoked, well fixed behind them, celestial Harmony was invoked through the slowly curling clouds. In Britain the Goddess is coy. She demands pressure to appear, and great gulps of ale. Vastly does she swell the chests of her island children, but with the modesty of a maid at the commencement. Precedence again disturbed the minds of the company. At last the red-faced young farmer led off with “The Rose and the Thorn.” In that day Chloe still lived: nor were the amorous transports of Strephon quenched. Mountainous inflation—mouse-like issue characterised the young farmer’s first verse. En-

couraged by manifest approbation he now told Chloe that he "by Heaven! never would plant in that bosom a thorn," with such volume of sound as did indeed show how a lover's oath should be uttered in the ear of a British damsel to subdue her.

"Good!" cried Mr. Raikes, anxious to be convivial.

Subsiding into impertinence, he asked Laxley, "Could you tip us a Strephonade, sir? Rejoiced to listen to you, I'm sure! Promise you my applause beforehand."

Harry replied hotly: "Will you step out of the room with me a minute?"

"Have you a confession to make?" quoth Jack unmoved. "Have *you* planted a thorn in the feminine flower-garden? Make a clean breast of it at the table. Confess openly and be absolved. 'Gad, there's a young woman in the house. *She* may be Chloe. If so, all I can say is, she may complain of a thorn of some magnitude, and will very soon exhibit one."

While Evan spoke a word of angry reproof to Mr. Raikes, Harry had to be restrained by his two friends. Jack's insinuation seemed to touch him keenly. By a strange hazard they had both glanced close upon facts.

Mutterings amid the opposite party of "Sit down," "Don't be an ass," "Leave the snob alone,"

were sufficiently distinct. The rest of the company looked on with curiosity; the mouth of the chairman was bunched. Drummond had his eyes on Evan, who was gazing steadily at the three. Suddenly "The fellow isn't a gentleman!" struck the attention of Mr. Raikes with alarming force.

I remember hearing of a dispute between two youthful clerks, one of whom launched at the other's head accusations that, if true, would have warranted his being expelled from society: till, having exhausted his stock, the youth gently announced to his opponent that he was a numskull: upon which the latter, hitherto full of forbearance, shouted that he could bear anything but that,—appealed to the witnesses generally for a corroboration of the epithet, and turned back his wristbands.

It was with similar sensations, inexplicable to the historian, that Mr. Raikes—who had borne to have imputed to him frightful things—heard that he was not considered a gentleman: and as they who are themselves, perhaps, doubtful of the fact, are most stung by the denial of it, so do they take refuge in assertion, and claim to establish it by violence.

Mr. John Raikes vociferated: "I'm the son of a gentleman!"

Drummond, from the head of the table, saw

that a diversion was imperative. He leaned forward, and with a look of great interest, said :

“Are you really? Pray never disgrace your origin, then.”

He spoke with an apparent sincerity, and Jack, absorbed by the three in front of him, and deceived by the mildness of his manner, continued glaring at them, after a sharp turn of the head, like a dog receiving a stroke while his attention is taken by a bone.

“If the choice were offered me, I think I would rather have known his father,” said the smiling fellow, yawning, and rocking on his chair.

“You would, possibly, have been exceedingly intimate—with his right foot,” said Jack.

The other merely remarked: “Oh! that is the language of the son of a gentleman.”

Jack’s evident pugnacity behind his insolence, astonished Evan, as the youth was not famed for bravery at school; but this is what dignity and ale do for us in the world.

The tumult of irony, abuse, and retort, went on despite the efforts of Drummond and the chairman. It was strange; for at farmer Broadmead’s end of the table, friendship had grown maudlin: two were seen in a drowsy embrace, with crossed pipes; and others were vowing deep amity, and offering to fight the man that might desire it.

“Are ye a friend? or are ye a foe?” was heard

repeatedly, and consequences to the career of the respondent, on his choice of affirmatives to either of these two interrogations, emphatically detailed.

It was likewise asked, in reference to the row at the gentlemen's end: "Why doan' they stand up and have't out?"

"They talks, they speechifies—why doan' they fight for't, and then be friendly?"

"Where's the yarmony, Mr. Chair, I axes—so please ye?" sang out farmer Broadmead.

"Ay, ay! Silence!" the chairman called.

Mr. Raikes begged permission to pronounce his excuses, but lapsed into a lamentation for the squandering of property bequeathed to him by his respected uncle, and for which—as far as he was intelligible—he persisted in calling the three offensive young cricketers opposite to account.

Before he could desist, Harmony, no longer coy, burst on the assembly from three different sources. "A Man who is given to Liquor," soared aloft with "The Maid of sweet Seventeen," who participated in the adventures of "Young Molly and the Kicking Cow;" while the guests selected the chorus of the song that first demanded it.

Evan probably thought that Harmony was herself only when she came single, or he was wearied of his fellows, and wished to gaze a moment on the skies whose arms were over and around his

young beloved. He went to the window and threw it up, and feasted his sight on the moon standing on the downs. He could have wept at the bitter ignominy that severed him from Rose. And again he gathered his pride as a cloak, and defied the world, and gloried in the sacrifice that degraded him. The beauty of the night touched him, and mixed these feelings with a strange mournfulness. He quite forgot the bellow and clatter behind. The beauty of the night, and heaven knows what treacherous hope in the depths of his soul, coloured existence very warmly.

He was roused from his reverie by an altercation unmistakably fierce.

Mr. Raikes had been touched on a tender point. In reply to a bantering remark of his, Laxley had hummed a list of Claret and Rhenish: "Liebfraumilch—Johannisberg—Asmannshauser—Steinberg—Chateau Margaux—La Rose—Lafitte," over and again, amid the chuckles of his comrades, and Mr. Raikes, unfortunately at a loss for a biting retort, was reduced to that plain confession of a lack of wit; he offered combat.

"I'll tell you what," said Laxley, "I never soil my hands with a blackguard; and a fellow who tries to make fun of Scripture, in my opinion is one. A blackguard—do you hear? But, if you'll

give me satisfactory proofs that you really are what I have some difficulty in believing—the son of a gentleman—I'll meet you when and where you please sir."

"Fight him, anyhow," said Harry. "I'll take him myself after we finish the match to-morrow."

Laxley rejoined that Mr. Raikes must be left to him.

"Then I'll take the other," said Harry. "Where is he?"

Evan walked round to his place.

"I am here," he answered, "and at your service."

"Will you fight?" cried Harry.

There was a disdainful smile on Evan's mouth, as he replied: "I must first enlighten you. I have no pretensions to blue blood, or yellow. If, sir, you will deign to challenge a man who is *not* the son of a gentleman, and consider the expression of his thorough contempt for your conduct sufficient to enable you to overlook that fact, you may dispose of me. My friend here has, it seems, reason to be proud of his connections. That you may not subsequently bring the charge against me of having led you to 'soil your hands'—as your friend there terms it—I, with all the willingness in the world to chastise you or him for your impertinence, must—as I conceive I am bound to do—first give you a fair chance of

escape, by telling you that my father was a tailor, and that I also am a tailor."

The countenance of Mr. Raikes at the conclusion of this speech was a painful picture. He knocked the table passionately, exclaiming:

"Who'd have thought it?"

Indeed, Evan could not have mentioned it, but for the ale. It was the ale in him expelling truth; and certainly, to look at him, none would have thought it.

"That will do," said Laxley, lacking the magnanimity to despise the advantage given him, "you have chosen the very best means of saving your skins."

"We'll come to you when our supply of clothes runs short," added Harry. "A snip!"

"Pardon me!" said Evan, with his eyes slightly widening, "but if you come to me, I shall no longer give you a choice of behaviour. I wish you good-night, gentlemen. I shall be in this house, and am to be found here, till ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Sir," he addressed the chairman, "I must apologise to you for this interruption to your kindness, for which I thank you very sincerely. It's 'good-night,' now, sir," he pursued, bowing, and holding out his hand, with a smile.

The chairman grasped it: "You're a hot-headed young fool, sir: you're an ill-tempered ferocious young ass, sir. Can't you see another

young donkey without joining company in kicks—eh? Sit down, and don't dare to spoil the fun any more. You a tailor! Who'll believe it? You're a nobleman in disguise. Didn't your friend say so?—ha! ha! Sit down." He pulled out his watch, and proclaiming that he was born into this world at the hour about to strike, called for a bumper all round.

While such of the company as had yet legs and eyes unvanquished by the potency of the ale, stood up to drink and cheer, Mark, the waiter, scurried into the room, and, to the immense stupefaction of the chairman, and amusement of his guests, spread the news of the immediate birth of a little stranger on the premises, who was declared by Dr. Pillie to be a lusty boy, and for whom the kindly landlady solicited good luck to be drunk.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MATCH OF FALLOWFIELD AGAINST BECKLEY.

THE dramatic proportions to which ale will exalt the sentiments within us, and our delivery of them, are apt to dwindle and shrink even below the natural elevation when we look back on them from the hither shore of the river of sleep—in other words, wake in the morning: and it was with no very self-satisfied emotions that Evan, dressing by the full light of day, reviewed his share in the events of the preceding night. Why, since he had accepted his fate, should he pretend to judge the conduct of people his superiors in rank? And where was the necessity for him to thrust the fact of his being that abhorred social pariah down the throats of an assembly of worthy good fellows? The answer was, that he had not accepted his fate: that he considered himself as good a gentleman as any man living, and was in absolute hostility with the prejudices of society. That was the state of the case; but the evaporation of ale in his brain caused him to view his actions from the humble extreme of that delightful

liquor, of which the spirit had flown and the corpse remained.

Having revived his system with soda-water, and finding no sign of his antagonist below, Mr. Raikes, to disperse the sceptical dimples on his friend's face, alluded during breakfast to a determination he had formed to go forth and show on the cricket-field.

"For, you know," Jack observed, "they can't have any objection to fight *me*."

Evan, slightly colouring, answered: "Why, you said up-stairs, you thought fighting duels disgraceful folly."

"So it is, so it is; everybody knows that," returned Jack; "but what can a gentleman do?"

"That's decisive," said Evan.

"What can a gentleman do?" Jack reiterated.

"Be a disgraceful fool, I suppose," said Evan: and Jack went on with his breakfast, as if to be such occasionally was the distinguished fate of a gentleman, of which others, not so happy in their birth, might well be envious.

Mr. Raikes could not help betraying that he bore in mind the main incidents of the festival over-night; for when he had enquired who it might be that had reduced his friend to wear mourning, and heard that it was his father (spoken by Evan with a quiet sigh), Mr. Raikes tapped an egg, and his flexible brows exhibited a whole Bar

of contending arguments within. More than for the love of pleasure, Mr. Raikes had spent his money to be taken for a gentleman. He naturally thought highly of the position, having bought it. But Mr. Raikes appreciated a capital fellow, and felt warmly to Evan, who, moreover, was feeding him. To put Evan in countenance, he said, with genial facetiousness, that was meant to mark his generous humility :

“ And I, Harrington, I mourn my hat. He is old—I mourn him yet living. The presence of crape on him signifies—he ne’er shall have a gloss again! Nay, more—for thus doth veritable sorrow serve us—it conceals one or two striking defects, my friend! I say! my family would be rather astonished to see me in this travesty—in this most strange attire, eh? ”

The latter sentence was uttered indirectly for the benefit of the landlady, who now stood smiling in the room, wishing them good morning, and hoping they had slept well. She handed to Evan his purse, telling him she had taken it last night, thinking it safer for the time being in her pocket; and that the chairman of the feast paid for all in the Green Dragon up to twelve that day, he having been born between the hours, and liking to make certain: and that every year he did the same; and was a seemingly rough old gentleman, but as soft-hearted as a chicken. His name must

positively not be inquired, she said ; to be thankful to him was to depart, asking no questions.

“And with a dart in the bosom from those eyes—those eyes!” cried Jack, shaking his head at the landlady’s resistless charms.

“I hope you was not one of the gentlemen who came and disturbed us last night, sir?” she turned on him sharply.

Jack dallied with the imputation, but denied his guilt.

“No ; it wasn’t your voice,” continued the landlady. “A parcel of young puppies calling themselves gentlemen ! I know him. It’s that young Mr. Laxley : and he the nephew of a Bishop, and one of the Honourables ! and then the poor gals get the blame. I call it a shame, I do. There’s that poor young creature up-stairs—somebody’s victim she is : and nobody’s to suffer but herself, the little fool !”

“Yes,” said Jack. “Ah ! we regret these things in after life !” and he looked as if he had many gentlemanly burdens of the kind on his conscience.

“It’s a wonder, to my mind,” remarked the landlady, when she had placidly surveyed Mr. Raikes, “how young gals *can* let some of you men-folk mislead ’em.”

“It is a wonder,” said Jack ; “but pray don’t be pathetic, ma’am—I can’t stand it.”

The landlady turned from him huffily, and addressed Evan: "The old gentleman is gone, sir. He slept on a chair, breakfasted, and was off before eight. He left word, as the child was born on his birthnight, he'd provide for it, and pay the mother's bill, unless you claimed the right. I'm afraid he suspected—what I never, never—no! but by what I've seen of you—never will believe. For you, I'd say, must be a gentleman, whatever your company. She asks one favour of you, sir:—for you to go and let her speak to you once before you go away for good. She's asleep now, and mustn't be disturbed. Will you do it, by and by? Please to comfort the poor creature, sir."

Evan consented. I am afraid also it was the landlady's flattering speech made him, without reckoning his means, add that the young mother and her child must be considered under his care, and their expenses charged to him. The landlady was obliged to think him a wealthy as well as a noble youth, and admiringly curtsied.

Mr. John Raikes and Mr. Evan Harrington then strolled into the air, and through a long court-yard, with brewhouse and dairy on each side, and a pleasant smell of baking bread, and dogs winking in the sun, cats at the corners of doors, satisfied with life, and turkeys parading, and fowls, strutting cocks, that upset the dignity of

Mr. Raikes by awakening his imitative propensities. Certain white-capped women, who were washing in a tub, laughed, and one observed: "He's for all the world like the little bantam cock stickin' 'self up in a crow against the Spaniar'." And this, and the landlady's marked deference to Evan, induced Mr. Raikes contemptuously to glance at our national blindness to the true diamond, and worship of the mere plumes in which a person is dressed.

"Strip a man of them—they don't know you," said Jack, despondently.

"You ought to carry about your baby-linen, stamped 'gentleman born,'" said Evan.

Jack returned: "It's all very well for you to joke, but—" his tardy delicacy stopped him.

They passed a pretty flower-garden, and entering a smooth-shorn meadow, beheld the downs beautifully clear under sunlight and slowly-sailing images of cloud. At the foot of the downs, on a plain of grass, stood a white booth topped by a flag, which signalled that on that spot Fallowfield and Beckley were contending.

"A singular old gentleman! A very singular old gentleman, that!" Jack observed, following an idea that had been occupying him. "We did wrong to miss him. We ought to have waylaid him in the morning. Never miss a chance, Harrington."

“What chance?” Evan inquired.

“Those old gentlemen are very odd,” Jack pursued: “very strange. *He* wouldn’t have judged me by my attire. Admetus’ flocks I guard, yet am a god! Dress is nothing to those old cocks. He’s an eccentric. I know it; I can see it. He’s a corrective of Cudford, who is abhorrent to my soul. To give you an instance, now, of what those old boys will do—I remember my father taking me, when I was quite a youngster, to a tavern he frequented, and we met one night just such an old fellow as this; and the waiter told us afterwards that he noticed me particularly. He thought me a very remarkable boy—predicted great things. For some reason or other my father never took me there again. I remember our having a Welsh rarebit there for supper, and when the waiter last night mentioned a rarebit, ’gad he started up before me. I gave chase into my early youth. However, my father never took me to meet the old fellow again. I believe it lost me a fortune.”

Evan’s thoughts were leaping to the cricket-field, or he would have condoled with Mr. Raikes for a loss that evidently afflicted him still, and of which he was doubtless frequently reminded on occasions when, in a bad hat, he gazed on a glittering company from afar.

“Shall we go over and look at them?” Evan

asked, after watching the distant scene wistfully.

“Hem! I don’t know,” Jack replied. “The fact is, my hat is a burden in the staring crowd. A hat like this should counsel solitude. Oh!” he fired up, “if you think I’m afraid, come along. Upon my honour!”

Evan, who had been smiling at him, laughed and led the way.

Now it must be told that the lady’s-maid of Mrs. Andrew Cogglesby, borrowed temporarily by the Countess de Saldar for service at Beckley Court, had slept in charge of the Countess’s boxes at the Green Dragon: the Countess having told her, with the candour of high-born dames to their attendants, that it would save expense; and that, besides, Admiral Combleman, whom she was going to see, or Sir Perkins Ripley (her father’s old friend), whom she should visit if Admiral Combleman was not at his mansion—both were likely to have full houses, and she could not take them by storm. An arrangement which left her upwards of twelve hours’ liberty, seemed highly proper to Maria Conning, this lady’s-maid, a very demure young person. She was at her bed-room window, as Evan passed up the court-yard of the inn, and recognised him immediately. “Can it be him they mean that’s the low tradesman?” was Maria’s mysterious exclamation. She examined the pair,

and added: "Oh no. It must be the tall one they've mistook for the small one. But Mr. Harrington ought not to demean himself by keeping company with such, and my lady should know of it."

My lady, alighting from the Lympport coach, did know of it, within a few minutes after Evan had quitted the Green Dragon, and turned pale, as high-born dames naturally do when they hear of a relative's disregard of the company he keeps.

"A tailor, my lady!" said scornful Maria; and the Countess jumped and complained of a pin.

"How did you hear of this, Conning?" she presently asked with composure.

"Oh, my lady, he was tipsy last night, and kept swearing out loud he was a gentleman."

"Tipsy!" the Countess murmured in terror. She had heard of inaccessible truths brought to light by the magic wand of alcohol. Was Evan intoxicated, and his dreadful secret unlocked last night?

"And who may have told you of this, Conning?" she asked.

Maria plunged into one of the boxes, and was understood to say that nobody in particular had told her, but that among other flying matters it had come to her ears.

"My brother is Charity itself," sighed the Countess. "He welcomes high or low."

“Yes, but, my lady, a tailor!” Maria repeated, and the Countess, agreeing with her scorn as she did, could have killed her. At least she would have liked to have run a bodkin into her, and made her scream. In her position she could not always be Charity itself: nor is this the required character for a high-born dame: so she rarely affected it.

“Order a fly: discover the direction Mr. Harrington has taken; spare me further remarks,” she said; and Maria humbly flitted from her presence.

When she was gone, the Countess covered her with her hands. “Even this creature would despise us!” she exclaimed.

The young lady encountered by Mr. Raikes on the road to Fallowfield, was wrong in saying that Beckley would be seen out before the shades of evening caught up the ball. Not one, but two men of Beckley—the last two—carried out their bats, cheered handsomely by both parties. The wickets pitched in the morning, they carried them in again, and plaudits renewed proved that their fame had not slumbered. To stand before a field, thoroughly aware that every successful stroke you make is adding to the hoards of applause in store for you—is a joy to your friends, an exasperation to your foes;—I call this an exciting situation, and one as proud as a man may desire. Then

again, the two last men of an eleven are twins : they hold one life between them ; so that he who dies extinguishes the other. Your faculties are stirred to their depths. You become engaged in the noblest of rivalries : in defending your own, you fight for your comrade's existence. You are assured that the dread of shame, if not emulation, is making him equally wary and alert.

Behold, then, the two bold men of Beckley fighting to preserve one life. Under the shadow of the downs they stand, beneath a glorious day, and before a gallant company. For there are ladies in carriages here, there are cavaliers ; good county names may be pointed out. The sons of first-rate families are in the two elevens, mingled with the yeomen and whoever can best do the business. Fallowfield and Beckley, without regard to rank, have drawn upon their muscle and science. One of the bold men of Beckley at the wickets is Nick Frim, son of the gamekeeper at Beckley Court ; the other is young Tom Copping, son of Squire Copping, of Dox Hall, in the parish of Beckley. Last year, you must know, Fallowfield beat. That is why Nick Frim, a renowned out-hitter, good to finish a score brilliantly with a pair of threes, has taken to blocking, and Mr. Tom cuts with caution, though he loves to steal his runs, and is usually dismissed by his remarkable cunning.

The field was ringing at a stroke of Nick Frim's, who had lashed out in his old familiar style at last, and the heavens heard of it, when Evan came into the circle of spectators. Nick and Tom were stretching from post to post, might and main. A splendid four was scored. The field took breath with the heroes; and presume not to doubt that heroes they are. It is good to win glory for your country; it is also good to win glory for your village. A Member of Parliament, Sir George Lowton, notes this emphatically, from the statesman's eminence, to a group of gentlemen on horseback round a carriage wherein a couple of fair ladies reclined.

"They didn't shout more at the news of the Battle of Waterloo. Now this is our peculiarity, this absence of extreme centralisation. It must be encouraged. Local jealousies, local rivalries, local triumphs—these are the strength of the kingdom."

"If you mean to say that cricket's a——" the old squire speaking (Squire Uploft of Fallowfield) remembered the saving presences, and coughed—"good thing, I'm one with ye, Sir George. Encouraged, egad! They don't want much of that here. Give some of your lean London straws a strip o' clean grass and a bit o' liberty, and you'll do 'em a service."

"What a beautiful hit!" exclaimed one of the

ladies, languidly watching the ascent of the ball.

“Beautiful, d’ye call it?” muttered the squire.

The ball, indeed, was dropping straight into the hands of the long-hit-off. Instantly a thunder rolled. But it was Beckley that took the joyful treble—Fallowfield the deeply-cursing bass. The long-hit-off, he who never was known to miss a catch—butter-fingered beast!—he has let the ball slip through his fingers.

Are there gods in the air? Fred Linnington, the unfortunate of Fallowfield, with a whole year of unhappy recollection haunting him in prospect, ere he can retrieve his character—Fred, if he does not accuse the powers of the sky, protests that he cannot understand it, which means the same. Fallowfield’s defeat—should such be the result of the contest—he knows now will be laid at his door. Five men who have bowled at the indomitable Beckleyans think the same. Albeit they are Britons, it abashes them. They are not the men they were. Their bowling is as the bowling of babies; and see! Nick, who gave the catch, and pretends he did it out of commiseration for Fallowfield, the ball has flown from his bat sheer over the booth. If they don’t add six to the score, it will be the fault of their legs. But no: they rest content with a fiver. Yet more they mean to do, and cherish their wind. Success

does not turn the heads of these Britons, as it would of your frivolous foreigners.

And now small boys (who represent the Press here) spread out from the marking-booth, announcing foremost, and in larger type, as it were, quite in Press style, their opinion—which is, that Fallowfield will get a jolly good hiding; and vociferating that Beckley is seventy-nine ahead, and that Nick Frim, the favourite of the field, has scored fifty-one to his own cheek. The boys are boys of both villages: but they are British boys—they adore prowess. The Fallowfield boys wish that Nick Frim would come and live on their side; the boys of Beckley rejoice in possessing him. Nick is the wicket-keeper of the Beckley eleven; long-limbed, wiry, keen of eye. His fault as a batsman is, that he will be a slashing hitter. He is too sensible of the joys of a grand spanking hit. A short life and a merry one, has hitherto been his motto.

But there were reasons for Nick's rare display of skill. That woman may have the credit due to her (and, as there never was a contest of which she did not sit at the springs, so is she the source of all superhuman efforts exhibited by men), be it told that Polly Wheedle is on the field; Polly, one of the upper housemaids of Beckley Court; Polly, eagerly courted by Fred Linnington, humbly desired by Nick Frim—a pert and bloom-

ing maiden—who, while her suitors combat hotly for an undivided smile, improves her holiday by instilling similar unselfish aspirations into the breasts of others.

Between his enjoyment of society and the melancholy it engendered in his mind by reflecting on him the age and decrepitude of his hat, Mr. John Raikes was doubtful of his happiness for some time. But as his taste for happiness was sharp, he, with a great instinct amounting almost to genius in its pursuit, resolved to extinguish his suspicion by acting the perfectly happy man. To do this, it was necessary that he should have listeners: Evan was not enough, and was besides unsympathetic. He had not responded to Jack's cordial assurances of his friendship "in spite of *anything*," uttered before they came into the field.

Mr. Raikes tried two or three groups. There is danger, when you are forcing a merry countenance before the mirror presented to you by your kind, that your features, unless severely practised, will enlarge beyond the artistic limits and degenerate to a grimace. Evan (hardly a fair judge, perhaps) considered the loud remarks of Mr. Raikes on popular pastimes, and the expression of his approval of popular sports, his determination to uphold them, his extreme desire to see the day when all the lower orders would have relaxation once a week, and his unaffected willing-

ness to stoop to join their sports, exaggerated, and, in contrast with his attire, incongruous. He allowed Mr. Raikes but a few minutes in one spot. He was probably too much absorbed in himself to see and admire the sublime endeavour of the imagination of Mr. Raikes to soar beyond his hat.

Heat and lustre were now poured from the sky, on whose soft blue a fleet of clouds sailed heavily. Nick Frim was very wonderful, no doubt. He deserved that the gods should recline on those gold-edged cushions above, and lean over to observe him. Nevertheless, the ladies were beginning to ask when Nick Frim would be out. The small boys alone preserved their enthusiasm for Nick. As usual, the men took a middle position. Theirs was the pleasure of critics, which, being founded on the judgment, lasts long, and is without disappointment at the close. It was sufficient that the ladies should lend the inspiration of their bonnets to this fine match. Their presence on the field is another beautiful instance of the generous yielding of the sex simply to grace our amusement, and their acute perception of the part they have to play.

Mr. Raikes was rather shy of them at first. But his acting rarely failing to deceive himself, he began to feel himself the perfectly happy man he impersonated, and where there were ladies Jack went, and talked of days when he had credit-

ably handled a bat, and of a renown in the annals of Cricket cut short by mysterious calamity. The foolish fellow did not know that they care not a straw for cricketing fame. Jack's gaiety presently forsook him as quickly as it had come. Instead of remonstrating at Evan's restlessness, it was he who now dragged Evan from spot to spot. He spoke low and nervously. By-and-by he caught hold of Evan's arm, and breathed in an awful voice the words :

"We're watched!"

"Oh, are we?" said Evan carelessly. "See, there are your friends of last night."

Laxley and Harry Jocelyn were seen addressing Miss Wheedle, who apparently had plenty of answers for them, and answers of a kind that encouraged her sheepish natural courtiers (whom the pair of youthful gentlemen entirely overlooked) to snigger and seem at their ease.

"Will you go over and show?" said Evan.

Mr. Raikes glanced from a corner of his eye, and returned, with tragic emphasis and brevity :

"We're watched. I shall bolt."

"Very well," said Evan. "Go to the inn. I'll come to you in an hour or so, and then we'll walk on to London, if you like."

"Bailiffs *do* take fellows in the country," murmured Jack. "They've an extraordinary scent. I fancied them among my audience when

I appeared on the boards. That's what upset me, I think. Is it much past twelve o'clock?"

Evan drew forth his watch.

"Just on the stroke."

"Then I shall just be in time to stick up something to the old gentleman's birthday. Perhaps I may meet him! I rather think he noticed me favourably. Who knows? A sprightly half-hour's conversation might induce him to do odd things. He shall certainly have my address."

Mr. Raikes, lingering, caught sight of an object, cried "Here he comes: I'm off," edged through the crowd, over whose heads he tried—standing on tip-toe—to gain a glimpse of his imaginary persecutor, and dodged away.

Evan strolled on. A long success is better when seen at a distance of time, and Nick Frim was beginning to suffer from the monotony of his luck. Fallowfield could do nothing with him. He no longer blocked. He lashed out at every ball, and far flew every ball that was bowled. The critics saw in this return to his old practices, promise of Nick's approaching extinction. The ladies were growing hot and weary. The little boys gasped on the grass, but like cunning circulators of excitement, spread a report to keep it up, that Nick, on going to his wickets the previous day, had sworn an oath that he would not lay

down his bat till he had scored a hundred. So they had still matter to agitate their youthful breasts, and Nick's gradual building up of tens, and prophecies and speculations as to his chances of completing the hundred, were still vehemently confided to the field, amid a general mopping of faces.

Evan did become aware that a man was following him. The man had not the look of a dreaded official. His countenance was sun-burnt and open, and he was dressed in a countryman's holiday suit. When Evan met his eyes they showed perplexity. Evan felt he was being examined from head to heel, but by one unaccustomed to his part, and without the courage to decide what he ought consequently to do while a doubt remained, though his inspection was verging towards a certainty in his mind.

At last, somewhat annoyed that the man should continue to dog him wherever he moved, he turned on him and asked him what he wanted?

"Be you a Muster Evv'n Harrington, Esquire?" the man drawled out in the rustic music of inquiry.

"That is my name," said Evan.

"Ay," returned the man, "it's somebody lookin' like a lord, and has a small friend wi' shockin' old hat, and I see ye come out o' the

Green Drag'n this mornin'—I don't reck'n there's e'er a mistaak, but I likes to make cock sure. Be you been to Poortigal, sir?"

"Yes," answered Evan, "I have been to Portugal."

"What's the name o' the capital o' Poortigal, sir?" The man looked immensely shrewd, and nodding his consent at the laughing reply, added:

"And there you was born, sir? You'll excuse my boldness, but I only does what's necessary."

Evan said he was not born there.

"No, not born there. That's good. Now, sir, did you happen to be born anywheres within smell o' salt water?"

"Yes," answered Evan, "I was born by the sea."

"Not far beyond fifty mile from Fall'field here, sir?"

"Something less."

"All right. Now I'm cock sure," said the man. "Now, if you'll have the kindness just to oblige me by—" he sped the words and the instrument jointly at Evan, "—takin' that there letter, I'll say good-bye, sir, and my work's done for the day."

Saying which, he left Evan with the letter in his hands.

Evan turned it over curiously. It was

addressed to "Evan Harrington, Esquire, T—— of Lymport."

A voice paralysed his fingers: the clear ringing voice of a young horsewoman, accompanied by a little maid on a pony, who galloped up to the carriage upon which Squire Uploft, Sir George Lowton, Hamilton Jocelyn, and other cavaliers, were in attendance.

"Here I am at last, and Beckley's in still! How d'ye do, Lady Roseley? How d'ye do, Sir George. How d'ye do, everybody. Your servant, Squire! We shall beat you. Harry says we shall soon be a hundred a-head of you. Fancy those boys! they would sleep at Fallowfield last night. How I wish you had made a bet with me, Squire."

"Well, my lass, it's not too late," said the Squire, detaining her hand.

"Oh, but it wouldn't be fair now. And I'm not going to be kissed on the field, if you please, Squire. Here, Dorry will do instead. Dorry! come and be kissed by the Squire."

It was Rose, living and glowing; Rose, who was the brilliant young Amazon, smoothing the neck of a mettlesome gray cob. Evan's heart bounded up to her, but his limbs were motionless.

The Squire caught her smaller companion in his arms, and sounded a kiss upon both her

cheeks ; then settled her in the saddle, and she went to answer some questions of the ladies. She had the same lively eyes as Rose ; quick saucy lips, red, and open for prattle. Rolls of auburn hair fell down her back, for being a child she was allowed privileges. To talk as her thoughts came, as well as to wear her hair as it grew, was a special privilege of this young person, on horseback or elsewhere.

“ Now, I know what you want to ask me, Aunt Shorne. Isn't it about my papa ? He's not come, and he won't be able to come for a week. —Glad to be with cousin Rosey ? I should think I am ! She's the nicest girl I ever could suppose. She isn't a bit spoiled by Portugal ; only browned ; and she doesn't care for that ; no more do I. I rather like the sun when it doesn't *freckle* you. I can't bear freckles, and I don't believe in milk for them. People who have them are such a figure. Drummond Forth has them, but he's a man, and it doesn't matter for a man to have freckles.—How's my uncle Mel ? Oh, he's quite well. I mean he has the gout in one of his fingers, and it's swollen so, it's just like a great fat fir cone ! He can't write a bit, and rests his hand on a table. He wants to have me made to write with my left hand as well as my right. As if I was ever going to have the gout in one of *my* fingers ! ”

Sir George Lowton observed to Hamilton Jocelyn, that Melville must take to his tongue now.

“I fancy he will,” said Hamilton. “My father won’t give up his nominee; so I fancy he’ll try Fallowfield. Of course, we go in for the agricultural interest; but there’s a cantankerous old ruffian down here—a brewer, or something—he’s got half the votes at his bidding. We shall see.”

“Dorothy, my dear child, are you not tired?” said Lady Roseley. “You are very hot.”

“Yes, that’s because Rose would tear along the road to get here in time, after we had left those tiresome Copping people, where she had to make a call. ‘What a slow little beast your pony is, Dorry!’—she said that at least twenty times.”

“Oh, you naughty puss!” cried Rose. “Wasn’t it, ‘Rosey, Rosey, I’m sure we shall be too late, and shan’t see a thing: do come along as hard as you can?’”

“I’m sure it was not,” Miss Dorothy retorted, with the large eyes of innocence. “You said you wanted to see Nick Frim keeping the wicket, and Ferdinand Laxley bowl. And, oh! you know something you said about Drummond Forth.”

“Now, shall I tell upon you?” said Rose,

“No, don’t!” hastily replied the little woman,

blushing. And the cavaliers laughed out, and the ladies smiled, and Dorothy added: "It isn't much, after all."

"Then, come; let's have it, or I shall be jealous," said the Squire.

"Shall I tell?" Rose asked slyly.

"It's unfair to betray one of your sex, Rose," remarked the sweetly-smiling lady.

"Yes, Lady Roseley—*mayn't* a woman have secrets?" Dorothy put it with great natural earnestness, and they all laughed aloud. "But I know a secret of Rosey's," continued Miss Dorothy, "and if she tells upon me, I shall tell upon her."

"They're out!" cried Rose, pointing her whip at the wickets. "Good night to Beckley! Tom Copping's run out."

Questions as to how it was done passed from mouth to mouth. Questions as to whether it was fair sprang from Tom's friends, and that a doubt existed was certain; the whole field was seen converging towards the two umpires: Farmer Broadmead for Fallowfield, Master Nat Hodges for Beckley.

"It really is a mercy there's some change in the game," said Mrs. Shorne, waving her parasol. "It's a charming game, but it wants variety—a little. When do you return, Rose?"

"Not for some time," said Rose, primly. "I

like variety very well, but I don't seek it by running away the moment I've come."

"No, but, my dear," Mrs. Shorne negligently fanned her face, "you will have to come with us, I fear, when we go. Your uncle accompanies us. I really think the Squire will, too; and Mr. Forth is no chaperon. Even you understand that."

"Oh, I can get an old man—don't be afraid," said Rose. "Or *must* I have an old woman, aunt?"

The lady raised her eyelids slowly on Rose, and thought: "If you were soundly whipped, my little madam, what a good thing it would be for you." And that good thing Mrs. Shorne was willing to do for Rose. She turned aside, and received the salute of an unmistakeable curate on foot.

"Ah, Mr. Parsley, you lend your countenance to the game, then?"

The Curate observed that sound Churchmen unanimously supported the game.

"Bravo!" cried Rose. "How I like to hear you talk like that, Mr. Parsley. I didn't think you had so much sense. You and I will have a game together—single-wicket. We must play for something—what shall it be?"

"Oh—for nothing," the Curate vacuously remarked.

“That’s for love, you rogue!” exclaimed the Squire. “Come, come, none o’ that, sir!—ha! ha!”

“Oh, very well; we’ll play for love,” said Rose.

“And I’ll hold the stakes, my dear—eh?”

“You dear old naughty Squire!—what do you mean?” Rose laughed. But she had all the men surrounding her, and Mrs. Shorne talked of departing.

Why did not Evan bravely march away? Why, he asked himself, had he come on this cricket-field to be made thus miserable? What right had such as he to look on Rose? Consider, however, the young man’s excuses. He could not possibly imagine that a damsel who rode one day to a match, would return on the following day to see it finished: or absolutely know that unseen damsel to be Rose Jocelyn. And if he waited, it was only to hear her sweet voice once again, and go for ever. As far as he could fathom his hopes, they were that Rose would not see him: but the hopes of youth are deep.

Just then a toddling small rustic stopped in front of Evan, and set up a howl for his “fayther.” Evan lifted him high to look over people’s heads, and discover his wandering parent. The urchin, when he had settled to his novel position, surveyed the field, and shouting, “Fayther,

fayther! here I bes on top of a gentleman!" made lusty signs, which attracted not his father alone. Rose sang out, "Who can lend me a penny?" Instantly the Curate and the Squire had a race in their pockets. The Curate was first, but Rose favoured the Squire, took his money with a nod and a smile, and rode at the little lad, to whom she was saying: "Here, bonny boy, this will buy you—"

She stopped and coloured.

"Evan!"

The child descended rapidly to the ground.

A bow and a few murmured words replied to her.

"Isn't this just like you, my dear Evan? Shouldn't I know that whenever I met you, you would be doing something kind? How did you come here? . You were on your way to Beckley!"

"To London," said Evan.

"To London! and not coming over to see me—us?"

Here the little fellow's father intervened to claim his offspring, and thank the lady and the gentleman; and, with his penny firmly grasped, he who had brought the lady and the gentleman together, was borne off a wealthy human creature.

Before much further could be said between them, the Countess de Saldar drove up.

"My dearest Rose!" and "My dear Coun-

tess!" and not "Louisa, then?" and, "I am very glad to see you!" without attempting the endearing "Louisa"—passed.

The Countess de Saldar then admitted the presence of her brother.

"Think!" said Rose. "He talks of going on straight from here to London."

"That pretty feminine pout will alone suffice to make him deviate, then," said the Countess, with her sweetest open slyness. "I am now on the point of accepting your most kind invitation. Our foreign habits allow us to visit—thus early! He will come with me."

Evan tried to look firm, and speak as he was trying to look. Rose fell to entreaty, and from entreaty rose to command; and in both was utterly fascinating to the poor youth. Luxuriously—while he hesitated and dwelt on this and that faint objection—his spirit drank the delicious changes of her face. To have her face before him but one day seemed so rich a boon to deny himself, that he was beginning to wonder at his constancy in refusal; and now that she spoke to him so pressingly, devoting her guileless eyes to him alone, he forgot a certain envious feeling that had possessed him while she was rattling among the other males—a doubt whether she ever cast a thought on Mr. Evan Harrington.

"Yes: he will come," cried Rose; "and he

shall ride home with me and my friend Drummond; and he shall have my groom's horse, if he doesn't mind. Bob can ride home in the cart with Polly, my maid; and he'll like that, because Polly's always good fun—when they're not in love with her. Then, of course, she torments them."

"Naturally," said the Countess.

Mr. Evan Harrington's final objection, based on his not having clothes, and so forth, was met by his foreseeing sister.

"I have your portmanteau packed, in with me, my dear brother; Conning has her feet on it. I divined that I should overtake you."

Evan felt he was in the toils. After a struggle or two he yielded; and, having yielded, did it with grace. In a moment, and with a power of self-compression equal to that of the adept Countess, he threw off his moodiness as easily as if it had been his Spanish mantle, and assumed a gaiety that made the Countess's eyes beam rapturously upon him, and was pleasing to Rose, apart from the lead in admiration the Countess had given her—not for the first time. We mortals, the best of us, may be silly sheep in our likes and dislikes: where there is no premeditated or instinctive antagonism, we can be led into warm acknowledgment of merits we have not sounded. This the Countess de Saldar knew right well.

Rose now intimated her wish to perform the ceremony of introduction between her aunt and uncle present, and the visitors to Beckley Court. The Countess smiled, and in the few paces that separated the two groups, whispered her brother: "*Miss Jocelyn*, my dear."

The eye-glasses of the Beckley group were dropped with one accord. The ceremony was gone through. The softly-shadowed differences of a grand manner addressed to ladies, and to males, were exquisitely accomplished by the Countess de Saldar.

"Harrington? Harrington?" her quick ear caught on the mouth of Squire Uploft, scanning Evan.

Her accent was very foreign, as she said aloud: "We are entirely strangers to your game—your creeckèt. My brother and myself are scarcely English. Nothing save diplomacy are we adepts in!"

"You must be excessively dangerous, madam," said Sir George, hat in air.

"Even in that, I fear, we are babes and sucklings, and might take many a lesson from you. Will you instruct me in your creeckèt? What are they doing now? It seems very unintelligible—indistinct—is it not?"

Inasmuch as Farmer Broadmead and Master Nat Hodges were surrounded by a clamorous

mob, shouting both sides of the case, as if the loudest and longest-winded were sure to wrest a favourable judgment from those two infallible authorities on the laws of cricket, the noble game was certainly in a state of indistinctness.

The Squire came forward to explain, piteously entreated not to expect too much from a woman's inapprehensive wits, which he plainly promised (under eyes that had melted harder men) he would not. His forbearance and bucolic gallantry were needed, for he had the Countess's radiant full visage alone. Her senses were dancing in her right ear, which had heard the name of Lady Roseley pronounced, and a voice respond to it from the carriage.

Into what a pit had she suddenly plunged! You ask why she did not drive away as fast as the horses would carry her, and fly the veiled head of Demogorgon obscuring valley and hill and the shining firmament, and threatening to glare destruction on her? You do not know an intriguer. She relinquishes the joys of life for the joys of intrigue. This is her element. The Countess did feel that the heavens were hard on her. She resolved none the less to fight her way to her object; for where so much had conspired to favour her—the decease of the generous Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay, and the invitation to Beckley Court—could she believe the

heavens in league against her? Did she not nightly pray to them, in all humbleness of body, for the safe issue of her cherished schemes? And in this, how unlike she was to the rest of mankind! She thought so; she relied on her devout observances; they gave her sweet confidence, and the sense of being specially shielded even when specially menaced. Moreover, tell a woman to put back, when she is once clearly launched! Timid as she may be, her light bark bounds to meet the tempest. I speak of women who do launch: they are not numerous, but, to the wise, the minorities are the representatives.

"Indeed, it is an intricate game!" said the Countess, at the conclusion of the Squire's explanation, and leaned over to Mrs. Shorne to ask her if she thoroughly understood it.

"Yes, I suppose I do," was the reply; "it—rather than the amusement they find in it." This lady had recovered Mr. Parsley from Rose, but had only succeeded in making the Curate unhappy, without satisfying herself.

The Countess gave her the shrug of secret sympathy.

"We must not *say* so," she observed aloud, most artlessly, and fixed the Squire with a bewitching smile, under which her heart beat thickly. As her eyes travelled from Mrs. Shorne to the Squire, she had marked Lady Roseley look-

ing singularly at Evan, who was mounting the horse of Bob the groom.

“Fine young fellow, that,” said the Squire to Lady Roseley, as Evan rode off with Rose.

“An extremely handsome, well-bred young man,” she answered. Her eyes met the Countess’s, and the Countess, after resting on their surface with an ephemeral pause, murmured: “*I must not praise my brother,*” and smiled a smile which was meant to mean: “*I think with you, and thank you, and love you for admiring him.*”

Had Lady Roseley joined the smile and spoken with animation afterwards, the Countess would have shuddered and had chills of dread. As it was, she was passably content. Lady Roseley slightly dimpled her cheek, for courtesy’s sake, and then looked gravely on the ground. This was no promise; it was even an indication (as the Countess read her), of something beyond suspicion in the lady’s mind; but it was a sign of delicacy, and a sign that her feelings had been touched, from which a truce might be reckoned on, and no betrayal feared.

She heard it said that the match was for honour and glory. A match of two days’ duration under a broiling sun, all for honour and glory! Was it not enough to make her despise the games of men? For something better she played. Her game was for one hundred thousand pounds, the

happiness of her brother, and the concealment of a horror. To win a game like that was worth the trouble. Whether she would have continued her efforts, had she known that the name of Evan Harrington was then blazing on a shop-front in Lymport, I cannot tell. The possessor of the name was in love, and did not reflect.

Smiling adieu to the ladies, bowing to the gentlemen, and apprehending all the homage they would pour out to her condescending beauty when she had left them, the Countess's graceful hand gave the signal for Beckley.

She stopped the coachman ere the wheels had rolled off the muffling turf, to enjoy one glimpse of Evan and Rose riding together, with the little maid on her pony in the rear. How suitable they seemed! how happy! She had brought them together after many difficulties:—might it not be? It was surely a thing to be hoped for!

Rose, galloping freshly, was saying to Evan: "Why did you cut off your moustache?"

He, neck and neck with her, replied: "You complained of it in Portugal."

And she: "Portugal's old times now to me—and I always love old times. I'm sorry! And, oh, Evan! did you really do it for me?"

And really, just then, flying through the air, close to the darling of his heart, he had not the courage to spoil that delicious question, but

dallying with the lie he looked in her eyes lingeringly.

This picture the Countess contemplated. Close to her carriage two young gentlemen-cricketers were strolling, while Fallowfield gained breath to decide which men to send in first to the wickets.

One of these stood suddenly on tiptoe, and pointing to the pair on horseback, cried, with the vivacity of astonishment :

“Look there! do you see that? What the deuce is little Rosey doing with the tailor-fellow?”

The Countess, though her cheeks were blanched, gazed calmly in Demogorgon's face, took a mental impression of the speaker, and again signalled for Beckley.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COUNTESS DESCRIBES THE FIELD OF ACTION.

Now, to clear up a point or two: You may think the Comic Muse is straining human nature rather toughly in making the Countess de Saldar rush open-eyed into the jaws of Demogorgon, dreadful to her. She has seen her brother pointed out unmistakably as the tailor-fellow. There is yet time to cast him off or fly with him. Is it her extraordinary heroism impelling her onward, or infatuated rashness? or is it her mere animal love of conflict?

The Countess de Saldar, like other adventurers, has her star. They who possess nothing on earth, have a right to claim a portion of the heavens. In resolute hands much may be done with a star. As it has empires in its gift, so may it have heiresses. The Countess's star had not blinked balefully at her. That was one reason why she went straight on to Beckley.

Again: the Countess was a born general. With her star above, with certain advantages secured, with battalions of lies disciplined and zealous, and with one clear prize in view, besides

other undeveloped benefits dimly shadowing forth, the Countess threw herself headlong into the enemy's country.

But, that you may not think too highly of this lady, I must add that the trivial reason was the exciting cause—as in many great enterprises. This was nothing more than the simple desire to be located, if but for a day or two, on the footing of her present rank, in the English country-house of an offshoot of our aristocracy. She who had moved in the first society of a foreign capital—who had married a count, a minister of his sovereign—had enjoyed delicious high-bred badinage with refulgent ambassadors—could boast the friendship of duchesses, and had been the amiable receptacle of their pardonable follies—she who, moreover, heartily despised things English:—this lady experienced thrills of proud pleasure at the prospect of being welcomed at a third-rate English mansion. But then, that mansion was Beckley Court. We return to our first ambitions, as to our first loves: not that they are dearer to us,—quit that delusion: our ripened loves and mature ambitions are probably closest to our hearts, as they deserve to be—but we return to them because our youth has a hold on us which it asserts whenever a disappointment knocks us down. Our old loves (with the bad natures I know in them) are always lurking to avenge themselves on the new

by tempting us to a little retrograde infidelity. A schoolgirl in Fallowfield, the tailor's daughter, had sighed for the bliss of Beckley Court. Beckley Court was her Elysium ere the ardent feminine brain conceived a loftier summit. Fallen from that attained eminence, she sighed anew for Beckley Court. Nor was this mere spiritual longing; it had its material side. At Beckley Court she could *feel* her foreign rank. Moving with our nobility as an equal, she could feel that the short dazzling glitter of her career was not illusory, and had left her something solid; not coin of the realm exactly, but yet gold. She could not feel this in the Cogglesby saloons, among pitiable bourgeois—middle-class people daily soiled by the touch of tradesmen! They dragged her down. Their very homage was a mockery.

Let the Countess have due credit for still allowing Evan to visit Beckley Court to follow up his chance. If Demogorgon betrayed her there, the Count was her protector: a woman rises to her husband. But a man is what he is, and must stand upon that. She was positive Evan had committed himself in some manner. But as it did not suit her to think so, she at once encouraged an imaginary conversation, in which she took the argument that it was quite impossible Evan could have been so mad, and others

instanced his youth, his wrong-headed perversity, his ungenerous disregard for his devoted sister, and his known weakness : she replying, that undoubtedly they were right so far : but that he could not have said he himself was that horrible thing, because he was nothing of the sort : which faith in Evan's steadfast adherence to facts, ultimately silenced the phantom opposition, and gained the day.

With admiration let us behold the Countess de Saldar alighting on the gravel-sweep of Beckley Court, the footmen and butler of the enemy bowing obsequious welcome to the most potent visitor Beckley Court has ever yet embraced.

The despatches of a general being usually acknowledged to be the safest sources from which the historian of a campaign can draw, I proceed to set forth a letter of the Countess de Saldar, forwarded to her sister, Harriet Cogglesby, three mornings after her arrival at Beckley Court ; and which, if it should prove false in a few particulars, does nevertheless let us into the state of the Countess's mind, and gives the result of that general's first inspection of the field of action. The Countess's epistolary English does small credit to her Fallowfield education ; but it is feminine, and flows more than her ordinary

speech. Besides, leaders of men have always notoriously been above the honours of grammar.

“MY DEAREST HARRIET,

“Your note awaited me. No sooner my name announced, than servitors in yellow livery, with powder and buckles started before me, and bowing one presented it on a salver. A venerable butler—most impressive! led the way. In future, my dear, let it be *de Saldar de Sancorvo*. That is our title *by rights*, and it may as well be so in England. English *Countess* is certainly best. Always put the *de*. But let us be systematic, as my poor Silva says. He would be in the way here, and had better not come till I see something he can do. Silva has great reliance upon me. The farther he is from Lymport, my dear!—and imagine me, Harriet, driving through Fallowfield to Beckley Court! I gave one peep at Dubbins’s, as I passed. The school still goes on. I saw three little girls skipping, and the old swing-pole. SEMINARY FOR YOUNG LADIES as bright as ever! I should have liked to have kissed the children and given them bonbons and a holiday.

“How sparing you English are of your crests and arms! I fully expected to see the Jocelyns’ over my bed; but no—four posts totally without ornament! Sleep, indeed, must be the result of dire fatigue in such a bed. The Jocelyn crest is

a hawk in jesses. The Elburne arms are, *Or*, three falcons on a field, *vert*. How heraldry reminds me of poor papa! the evenings we used to spend with him, when he stayed at home, studying it so diligently under his directions! We never shall again! Sir Frank Jocelyn is the *third* son of Lord Elburne, made a Baronet for his patriotic support of the Ministry in a time of great trouble. The people are *sometimes* grateful, my dear. Lord Elburne is the fourteenth of his line—originally simple country squires. They talk of the Roses, but we need not go so very far back as that. I do not quite understand why a Lord's son should condescend to a Baronetcy. Precedence of some sort for his lady, I suppose. I have yet to learn whether she ranks by his birth, or his present title. If so, a young Baronetcy cannot possibly be a *gain*. One thing is *certain*. She cares very little about it. She is *most eccentric*. But remember what I have told you. It will be serviceable when you are speaking of the *family*.

“The dinner-hour, six. It would no doubt be *full seven* in Town. I am convinced you are half-an-hour too early. I had the post of honour to the right of Sir Franks. Evan to the right of Lady Jocelyn. Most fortunately he was in the best of spirits—quite brilliant. I saw the eyes of that sweet Rose glisten. On the other side of me

sat my pet diplomatist, and I gave him one or two political secrets which astonished him. Of course, my dear, I was wheedled out of them. His contempt for our weak intellects is ineffable. But a woman *must* now and then ingratiate herself at the expense of her sex. This is perfectly legitimate. Tory policy at the table. The Opposition, as Andrew says, not represented. So to show that we were human beings, we differed among ourselves, and it soon became clear to me that Lady Jocelyn is the *rankest* of Radicals. My secret suspicion is, that she is a person of no birth whatever, wherever her money came from. A fine woman—yes; still to be admired, I suppose, by some kind of men; but totally wanting in the essentially feminine attractions.

“There was no party, so to say. I will describe the people present, beginning with the *insignificants*.

“First, Mr. Parsley, the curate of Beckley. He eats everything at table, and agrees with everything. A most excellent orthodox young clergyman. Except that he was nearly choked by a fish-bone, and could not quite conceal his distress—and really Rose should have repressed her desire to laugh till the time for our retirement—he made no sensation. I saw her eyes watering, and she is not clever in turning it off. In *that* nobody ever equalled dear papa. I attribute

the attack almost entirely to the tightness of the white neckcloths the young clergymen of the Established Church wear. But, my dear, I have lived too long away from them to wish for an instant the slightest change in anything they think, say, or do. The mere sight of this young man was most refreshing to my spirit. He may be the shepherd of a flock, my dear, this poor Mr. Parsley, but he is a sheep to one young person.

“Mr. Drummond Forth. A great favourite of Lady Jocelyn’s; an old friend. He went with them to the East. Nothing improper. She is too cold for that. He is fair, with regular features, very self-possessed, and ready—your English notions of gentlemanly. But none of your men treat a woman *as a woman*. We are either angels, or good fellows, or heaven knows what that is bad. No exquisite delicacy, no insinuating softness mixed with respect, none of that *hovering over the border*, as papa used to say, none of that happy indefiniteness of manner which seems to declare ‘I would love you if I might,’ or ‘I do, but I dare not tell,’ even when engaged in the most trivial attentions—handing a footstool, remarking on the soup, &c. You none of you know how to *meet* a woman’s smile, or to engage her eyes without boldness—to *slide off them*, as it were, gracefully. Evan alone can look between

the eyelids of a woman. I have had to correct him, for to me he quite exposes the state of his heart towards dearest Rose. She listens to Mr. Forth with evident esteem. In Portugal we do not understand young ladies having male friends.

“Hamilton Jocelyn — all politics. The stiff Englishman. Not a shade of manners. He invited me to drink wine. Before I had finished my bow his glass was empty—the man was telling an anecdote of Lord Livelyston! You may be sure, my dear, I did not say I had seen his lordship.

“Seymour Jocelyn, Colonel of Hussars. He did nothing but sigh for the cold weather, and hunting. All I envied him was his moustache for Evan. Will you believe that the ridiculous boy has shaved!

“Then there is Melville, my dear diplomatist; and here is another instance of our Harrington luck. He has the gout in his right hand; he can only just hold knife and fork, and is interdicted Port-wine and penmanship. The dinner was not concluded before I had arranged that Evan should resume (gratuitously, you know) his post of secretary to him. So here is Evan fixed at Beckley Court as long as Melville stays. Talking of him, I am horrified suddenly. They call him *the great Mel!*

“ Sir Franks is most estimable, I am sure, as a man, and redolent of excellent qualities—a beautiful disposition, very handsome. He has just as much and no more of the English polish one ordinarily meets. When he has given me soup or fish, bowed to me over wine, and asked a conventional question, he has done with me. I should imagine his opinions to be extremely good, for they are not a multitude.

“ Then his lady—but I have not grappled with her yet. Now for the women, for I quite class her with the opposite sex.

“ You must know that before I retired for the night, I induced Conning to think she had a bad head-ache, and Rose lent me her lady’s-maid—they call the creature Polly. A terrible talker. She would tell all about the family. Rose has been speaking of Evan. It would have looked better had she been quiet—but then she is so English ! ”

Here the Countess breaks off to say that, from where she is writing, she can see Rose and Evan walking out to the cypress avenue, and that no eyes are on them; great praise being given to the absence of suspicion in the Jocelyn nature.

The communication is resumed the night of the same day.

“ Two days at Beckley Court are over, and that

strange sensation I had of being an intruder escaped from Dubbins's, and expecting every instant the old schoolmistress to call for me, and expose me, and take me to the dark room, is quite vanished, and I feel quite at home, and quite happy. Evan is behaving very well. Quite the young nobleman. With the women I had no fear of him—he is really admirable with the men—easy, and talks of sport and politics, and makes the proper use of Portugal. He has quite won the heart of his sister. Heaven smiles on us, dearest Harriet!

“We must be favoured, my dear, for Evan is very troublesome—distressingly inconsiderate! I left him for a day—remaining to comfort poor mama—and on the road he picked up an object he had known at school, and this creature in shameful garments, is seen in the field where Rose and Evan are riding—in a dreadful hat—Rose might well laugh at it!—he is seen running away from an *old apple woman*, whose fruit he had consumed without means to liquidate; but, of course, he rushes bolt up to Evan before all his grand company, and claims acquaintance, and Evan was base enough to acknowledge him! He disengaged himself so far well by tossing his purse to the wretch, but if he knows not how to *cut*, I assure him it will be his ruin. Resolutely he must cast the dust off his shoes, or he will

be dragged down to their level. Apples, my dear!

“ Looking out on a beautiful lawn, and the moon, and all sorts of trees, I must now tell you about the ladies here.

“ Conning undid me to-night. While Conning remains *unattached*, Conning is likely to be serviceable. If Evan would only *give her a crumb*, she would be his most faithful dog. I fear he cannot be induced, and Conning will be snapped up by somebody else. You know how susceptible she is behind her primness—she will be of no use on earth, and I shall find excuse to send her back immediately. After all, her appearance here was all that was wanted.

“ Mrs. Melville and her dreadful juvenile are here, as you may imagine—the complete English-woman. I smile on her, but I could laugh. To see the crow’s-feet under her eyes on her white skin, and those ringlets, is really too ridiculous. Then there is a Miss Carrington, Lady Jocelyn’s cousin, aged thirty-two—if she has not tampered with the register of her birth. I should think her equal to it. Between dark and fair. Always in love with some man, Conning tells me she hears. Rose’s maid, Polly, hinted the same. She has a little money.

“ But my sympathies have been excited by a little cripple—a niece of Lady Jocelyn’s, and the

favourite grand-daughter of the rich old Mrs. Bonner—also here—Juliana Bonner. Her age must be twenty. You would take her for ten. In spite of her immense expectations, the Jocelyns hate her. They can hardly be civil to her. It is the poor child's temper. She has already begun to watch dear Evan—certainly the handsomest of the men here as yet, though I grant you, they are well-grown men, these Jocelyns, for an untravelled Englishwoman. I fear, dear Harriet, we have been dreadfully deceived about Rose. The poor child has not, in her own right, much more than a tenth part of what we supposed, I fear. It was that Mrs. Melville. I have had occasion to notice her quiet boasts here. She said this morning, 'when Mel is in the Ministry'—he is not yet in Parliament! I feel quite angry with the woman, and she is not so cordial as she might be. I have her profile very frequently while I am conversing with her.

“With Grandmama Bonner I am excellent good friends,—venerable silver hair, high caps, &c. More of this most interesting Juliana Bonner by-and-by. It is clear to me that Rose's fortune is calculated upon the dear invalid's death! Is not that harrowing? It shocks me to think of it.

“Then there is Mrs. Shorne. She is a Jocelyn—and such a history! She married a wealthy

manufacturer—bartered her blood for his money, and he failed, and here she resides, a bankrupt widow, petitioning any man that may be willing for his love *and* a decent home. *And*—I say in charity.

“Mrs. Shorne comes here to-morrow. She is at present with—guess my dear!—with Lady Roseley. Do not be alarmed. I have met Lady Roseley. She heard Evan’s name, and by that and the likeness I saw she knew at once, and I saw a *truce* in her eyes. She gave me a tacit assurance of it—she was engaged to dine here yesterday, and put it off—probably to grant us time for composure. If she comes I do not fear her. Besides, has she not reasons? Providence may have designed her for a staunch ally—I will not say, confederate.

“Would that Providence had fixed this beautiful mansion five hundred miles from L——, though it were in a desolate region! And that reminds me of the Madre. She is in health. She always will be overbearingly robust till the day we are bereft of her. There was some secret in the house when I was there, which I did not trouble to penetrate. That little Jane F—— was there—not improved.

“Pray be firm about Torquay. Estates mortgaged, but hopes of saving a remnant of the property for poor Evan! *Third* son! Don’t

commit yourself there. We dare not baronetise him. You need not speak it—imply. More can be done that way.

“And remember, dear Harriet, that you must manage Andrew so that we may positively promise his vote to the Ministry on *all* questions when Parliament next assembles. I understood from Lord Livelyston, that Andrew’s vote would be thought much of. A most amusing nobleman! He pledged himself to nothing! But we are above such a thing as a commercial transaction. He *must* countenance Silva. Women, my dear, have sent out armies—why not *fleets*? Do not spare me your utmost aid in my extremity, my dearest sister.

“As for Strike, I refuse to speak of him. He is insufferable and next to useless. How can one talk with any confidence of relationship with a Major of Marines? When I reflect on what he is, and his conduct to Caroline, I have inscrutable longings to slap his face. Tell dear Carry her husband’s friend—the chairman or something of that wonderful company of Strike’s—you know—the Duke of Belfield is coming here. He is a blood-relation of the Elburnes, *therefore* of the Jocelyns. It will not matter at all. Breweries, I find, are quite in esteem in your England. It was highly commendable in his Grace to visit you. Did he come to see the Major of Marines?

Caroline is certainly the loveliest woman I ever beheld, and I forgive her now the pangs of jealousy she used to make me feel.

“ Andrew, I hope, has received the most kind invitations of the Jocelyns. He *must* come. Melville must talk with him about the votes of his abominable brother in Fallowfield. We *must* elect Melville and have the family indebted to us. But pray be careful that Andrew speaks not a word to his odious brother about our location here. It would set him dead against these hospitable Jocelyns. It will perhaps be as well, dear Harriet, if you do not accompany Andrew. You would not be able to *account* for him quite thoroughly. Do as you like—I do but advise, and you know I may be trusted—for our sakes, dear one! Adieu! Heaven bless your babes!”

The night passes, and the Countess pursues :

“ Awakened by your fresh note from a dream of Evan on horseback, and a multitude hailing him Count Jocelyn for Fallowfield! A morning dream. They *might* desire that he should change his name; but ‘ Count ’ is preposterous, though it may conceal something.

“ You say Andrew will come, and talk of his bringing Caroline. *Anything* to give our poor darling a respite from her brute. You deserve great credit for your managing of that dear little

good-natured piece of obstinate man. I will at once see to prepare dear Caroline's welcome, and trust her stay may be prolonged in the interests of common humanity. They have her story here already.

"Conning has come in, and says that young Mr. Harry Jocelyn will be here this morning from Fallowfield, where he has been cricketing. The family have not spoken of him in my hearing. He is not, I think, in good odour at home—a scapegrace. Rose's maid, Polly, quite flew out when I happened to mention him, and broke one of my laces. These English maids are domesticated savage animals.

"My chocolate is sent up, exquisitely concocted, in plate of the purest quality—lovely little silver cups! I have already quite set the fashion for the ladies to have chocolate in bed. The men, I hear, complain that there is no lady at the breakfast-table. They have Miss Carrington to superintend. I read, in the subdued satisfaction of her eyes (completely without colour), how much she thanks me and the institution of chocolate in bed. Poor Miss Carrington is no match for her opportunities. One may give them to her without dread.

"It is ten on the Sabbath morn. The sweet church-bells are ringing. It seems like a dream. There is nothing but the religion attaches me

to England ; but *that*—is not that everything ? How I used to sigh on Sundays to hear them in Portugal !

“ I have an idea of instituting toilette-receptions. They will not please Miss Carrington so well.

“ Now to the peaceful village church, and divine worship. Adieu, my dear. I kiss my fingers to Silva. Make no effort to amuse him. He is always occupied. Bread!—he asks no more. Adieu ! Adieu ! ”

Filled with pleasing emotions at the thoughts of the service in the quiet village church, and worshipping in the principal pew, under the blazonry of the Jocelyn arms, the Countess sealed her letter and addressed it, and then examined the name of Cogglesby ; which plebeian name, it struck her, would not sound well to the menials of Beckley Court. While she was deliberating what to do to conceal it, she heard, through her open window, the voices of some young men laughing. She beheld her brother pass these young men, and bow to them. She beheld them stare at him without at all returning his salute, and then one of them—the same who had filled her ears with venom at Fallowfield—turned to the others and laughed outrageously, crying :

“By Jove! this comes it strong. Fancy the snipocracy here—eh?”

What the others said the Countess did not wait to hear. She put on her bonnet hastily, tried the effect of a peculiar smile in the mirror, and lightly ran down stairs.

CHAPTER XV.

A CAPTURE.

THE three youths were standing in the portico when the Countess appeared among them. She singled out him who was specially obnoxious to her, and sweetly inquired the direction to the village post. With the renowned gallantry of his nation, he offered to accompany her, but presently, with a different exhibition of the same, proposed that they should spare themselves the trouble by dropping the letter she held prominently, in the bag.

“Thanks,” murmured the Countess, “I will go.” Upon which his eager air subsided, and he fell into an awkward silent march at her side, looking so like the victim he was to be, that the Countess could have emulated his power of laughter.

“And you are Mr. Harry Jocelyn, the very famous cricketer?”

He answered, glancing back at his friends, that he was, but did not know about the “famous.”

“Oh! but I saw you—I saw you hit the ball most beautifully, and dearly wished my brother

had an equal ability. Brought up in the Court of Portugal, he is barely English. *There* they have no manly sports. You saw him pass you?"

"Him! Whom?" asked Harry.

"My brother, on the lawn, this moment. Your sweet sister's friend. Your Uncle Melville's secretary."

"What's his name?" said Harry, in blunt perplexity.

The Countess repeated his name, which in her pronunciation was "Hawington," adding, "That was my brother. I am his sister. Have you heard of the Countess de Saldar?"

"Countess!" muttered Harry. "Dash it! here's a mistake."

She continued, with elegant fan-like motion of her gloved fingers: "They say there is a likeness between us. The dear Queen of Portugal often remarked it, and in her it was a compliment to me, for she thought my brother a model! You I should have known from your extreme resemblance to your lovely young sister."

Coarse food, but then Harry was a youthful Englishman; and the Countess dieted the vanity according to the nationality. With good wine to wash it down, one can swallow anything. The Countess lent him her eyes for that purpose; eyes that had a liquid glow under the dove-like drooping lids. It was a principle of hers,

pampering our poor sex with swinish solids or the lightest ambrosia, never to let the accompanying cordial be other than of the finest quality. She knew that clowns, even more than aristocrats, are flattered by the inebriation of delicate celestial liquors.

“Now,” she said, after Harry had gulped as much of the dose as she chose to administer direct from the founts, “you must accord me the favour to tell me all about yourself, for I have heard much of you, Mr. Harry Jocelyn, and you have excited my woman’s interest. Of me you know nothing.”

“Haven’t I?” cried Harry, speaking to the pitch of his new warmth. “My Uncle Melville goes on about you tremendously—makes his wife as jealous as fire. How could I tell that was your brother?”

“Your uncle has deigned to allude to me?” said the Countess, meditatively. “But not of him—of you, Mr. Harry! What does he say?”

“Says you’re so clever you ought to be a man.”

“Ah! generous!” exclaimed the Countess, “The idea, I think, is novel to him. Is it not?”

“Well, I believe, from what I hear, he didn’t back you for much over in Lisbon,” said veracious Harry.

“I fear he is deceived in me now. I fear I am

but a woman—I am not to be ‘backed.’ But you are not talking of yourself.”

“Oh! never mind me,” was Harry’s modest answer.

“But I do. Try to imagine me as clever as a man, and talk to me of your doings. Indeed I will endeavour to comprehend you.”

Thus humble, the Countess bade him give her his arm. He stuck it out with abrupt eagerness.

“Not against my cheek.” She laughed forgivingly. “And you need not start back half-a-mile,” she pursued with plain humour, “and please, do not look irresolute and awkward—it is not necessary,” she added. “There!” and she settled her fingers on him, “I am glad I can find one or two things to instruct *you* in. Begin. You are a great cricketer. What else?”

Ay! what else? Harry might well say he had no wish to talk of himself. He did not know even how to give his arm to a lady! The first flattery and the subsequent chiding clashed in his elated soul, and caused him to deem himself one of the blest suddenly overhauled by an inspecting angel and found wanting: or, in his own more accurate style of reflection, “What a rattling fine woman this is, and what a deuce of a fool she must think me!”

The Countess leaned on his arm with dainty languor.

"You walk well," she said.

Harry's backbone straightened immediately.

"No, no; I do not want you to be a drill-sergeant. Can you not be told you are perfect without seeking to improve, vain boy? You can cricket, and you can walk, and will very soon learn how to give your arm to a lady. I have hopes of you. Of your friends, from whom I have ruthlessly dragged you, I have not much. Am I personally offensive to them, Mr. Harry? I saw them let my brother pass without returning his bow, and they in no way acknowledged my presence as I passed. Are they gentlemen?"

"Yes," said Harry, stupefied by the question, "One's Ferdinand Laxley, Lord Laxley's son, heir to the title; the other's William Harvey, son of the Chief Justice—both friends of mine."

"But not of your manners," interposed the Countess. "I have not so much compunction as I ought to have in divorcing you from your associates for a few minutes. I think I shall make a scholar of you in one or two essentials. You do want polish. Have I not a right to take you in hand? I have defended you already."

"Me?" cried Harry.

"None other than Mr. Harry Jocelyn. Will he vouchsafe to me his pardon? It has been whispered in my ears that his ambition is to be the Don Juan of a country district, and I have

said for him that, however grovelling his un-directed tastes, he is too truly noble to plume himself upon the reputation they have procured him. Why did I defend you? Women, you know, do not shrink from Don Juans—even provincial Don Juans—as they should, perhaps, for their own sakes! You are all of you dangerous, if a woman is not strictly on her guard. But you will respect your champion, will you not?”

Harry was about to reply with wonderful briskness. He stopped, and murmured boorishly that he was sure he was very much obliged.

Command of countenance the Countess possessed in common with her sex. Those faces on which we make them depend entirely, women can entirely control. Keenly sensible to humour as the Countess was, her face sidled up to his immovably sweet. Harry looked, and looked away, and looked again. The poor fellow was so profoundly aware of his foolishness that he even doubted whether he was admired.

The Countess trifled with his English nature; quietly watched him bob between tugging humility and airy conceit, and went on:

“Yes! I will trust you, and that is saying very much, for what protection is a brother? I am alone here—defenceless!”

Men, of course, grow virtuously zealous in an instant on behalf of the lovely dame who tells

them bewitchingly, she is alone and defenceless, with pitiful dimples round the dewy mouth that entreats their guardianship and mercy!

The provincial Don Juan found words—a sign of clearer sensations within. He said:

“Upon my honour, I’d look after you better than fifty brothers!”

The Countess eyed him softly, and then allowed herself the luxury of a laugh.

“No, no! it is not the sheep, it is the wolf I fear.”

And she went through a bit of the concluding portion of the drama of Little Red Riding Hood very prettily, and tickled him so that he became somewhat less afraid of her.

“Are you truly so bad as report would have you to be, Mr. Harry?” she asked, not at all in the voice of a censor.

“Pray, don’t think me—a—anything you wouldn’t have me,” the youth stumbled into an apt response.

“We shall see,” said the Countess, and varied her admiration for the noble creature beside her with gentle ejaculations on the beauty of the deer that ranged the park of Beckley Court, the grand old oaks and beeches, the clumps of flowering laurel, and the rich air swarming summer.

She swept out her arm. “And this most magnificent estate will be yours? How happy will

she be who is led hither to reside by you, Mr. Harry!"

"Mine? No; there's the bother," he answered, with unfeigned chagrin. "Beckley isn't Elburne property, you know. It belongs to old Mrs. Bonner, Rose's grandmama."

"Oh!" interjected the Countess, indifferently.

"I shall never get it—no chance," Harry pursued. "Lost my luck with the old lady long ago." He waxed excited on a subject that drew him from his shamefacedness. "It goes to Juley Bonner, or to Rosey; it's a toss-up which. If I'd stuck up to Juley, I might have had a pretty fair chance. They wanted me to, that's why I scout the premises. But fancy Juley Bonner!"

"You couldn't, upon your honour!" rhymed the Countess. (And Harry let loose a delighted "Ha! ha!" as at a fine stroke of wit.) "Are we enamoured of a beautiful maiden, Señor Harry?"

"Not a bit," he assured her, eagerly. "I don't know any girl. I don't care for 'em. I don't, really."

The Countess impressively declared to him that he must be guided by her; and that she might the better act his monitress, she desired to hear the pedigree of the estate, and the exact relations in which it at present stood towards the Elburne family.

Glad of any theme he could speak on, Harry informed her that Beckley Court was bought by his grandfather Bonner from the proceeds of a successful oil speculation.

“So we ain’t much on that side,” he said.

“Oil!” was the Countess’s weary exclamation, “I imagined Beckley Court to be your ancestral mansion. Oil!”

Harry deprecatingly remarked that oil was money.

“Yes,” she replied; “but you are not one to mix oil with your Elburne blood. Let me see—oil! That, I conceive, is grocery. So, you are grocers on one side!”

“Oh, come! hang it!” cried Harry, turning red.

“Am I leaning on the grocer’s side, or on the lord’s?”

Harry felt dreadfully taken down. “One ranks with one’s father,” he said.

“Yes,” observed the Countess; “but you should ever be careful not to expose the grocer. When I beheld my brother bow to you, and that your only return was to stare at him in that singular way, I was not aware of this, and could not account for it.”

“I declare I’m very sorry,” said Harry, with a nettled air. “Do just let me tell you how it happened. We were at an inn, where there was an odd old fellow gave a supper; and there was

your brother, and another fellow—as thorough an upstart as I ever met, and infernally impudent. He got drinking, and wanted to fight us. Now I see it! Your brother, to save his friend’s bones, said he was a tailor! Of course no gentleman could fight a tailor; and it blew over with my saying we’d order our clothes of him.”

“Said *he* was a——!” exclaimed the Countess, gazing blankly.

“I don’t wonder at your feeling annoyed,” returned Harry. “I saw him with Rosey next day, and began to smell a rat then, but Laxley won’t give up the tailor. He’s as proud as Lucifer. He wanted to order a suit of your brother to-day; but I said not while he’s in the house, however he came here.”

The Countess had partially recovered. They were now in the village street, and Harry pointed out the post-office.

“Your divination with regard to my brother’s most eccentric behaviour was doubtless correct,” she said. “He wished to succour his wretched companion. Anywhere—it matters not to him what!—he allies himself with miserable mortals. He is the modern Samaritan. You should thank him for saving you an encounter with some low creature.”

Swaying the letter to and fro, she pursued archly: “I can read your thoughts. You are

dying to know to whom this dear letter is addressed!"

Instantly Harry, whose eyes had previously been quite empty of expression, glanced at the letter wistfully.

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, do."

"It's to somebody I love."

"Are you in love then?" was his disconcerted rejoinder.

"Am I not married?"

"Yes; but every woman that's married isn't in love with her husband, you know."

"Oh! Don Juan of the provinces!" she cried, holding the seal of the letter before him in playful reproof. "Fie!"

"Come! who is it?" Harry burst out.

"I am not, surely, obliged to confess my correspondence to you? Remember!" she laughed lightly. "He already assumes the airs of a lord and master! You are rapid, Mr. Harry."

"Won't you really tell me?" he pleaded.

She put a corner of the letter in the box. "Must I?"

All was done with the archest elegance: the bewildering condescension of a goddess to a boor.

"I don't say you must, you know; but I should like to see it," returned Harry.

"There!" She showed him a glimpse of "Mrs.," cleverly concealing plebeian "Cogglesby," and the letter slid into darkness. "Are you satisfied?"

"Yes," said Harry, wondering why he felt a relief at the sight of "Mrs." written on a letter by a lady he had only known half an hour.

"And now," said she, "I shall demand a boon of you, Mr. Harry. Will it be accorded?"

She was hurriedly told that she might count upon him for whatever she chose to ask; and after much trifling and many exaggerations of the boon in question, he heard that she had selected him as her cavalier for the day, and that he was to consent to accompany her to the village church.

"Is it so great a request, the desire that you should sit beside a solitary lady for so short a space?" she asked, noting his rueful visage.

Harry assured her he would be very happy, but hinted at the bother of having to sit and listen to that fool of a Parsley: again assuring her, and with real earnestness, which she now affected to doubt, that he would be extremely happy.

"You know, I haven't been there for ages," he explained.

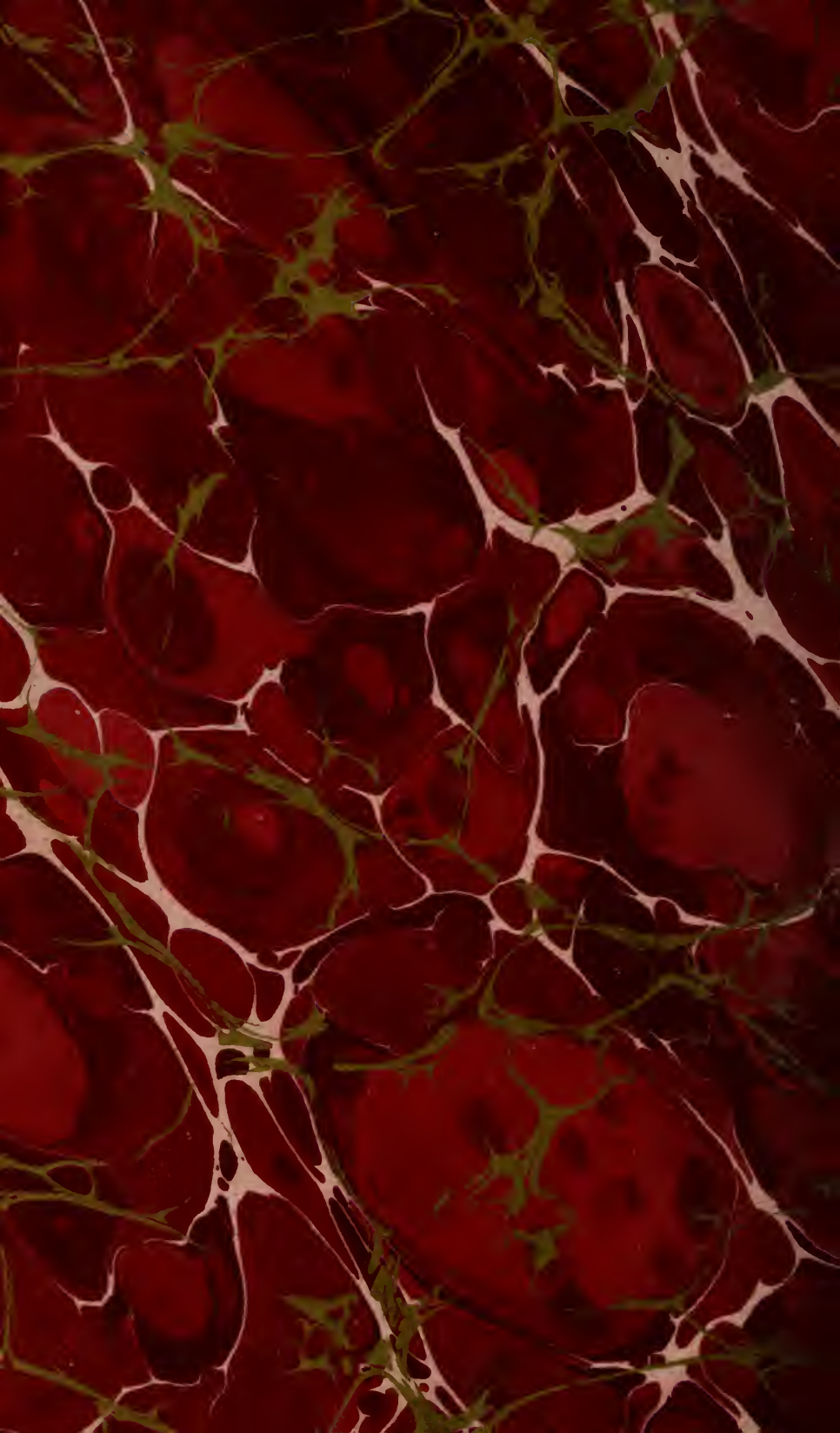
"I hear it!" she sighed, aware of the credit his escort would bring her in Beckley, and especially with Harry's grandmama Bonner.

They went together to the village church. The

Countess took care to be late, so that all eyes beheld her stately march up the aisle, with her captive beside her. Nor was her captive less happy than he professed he would be. Charming comic side-play, at the expense of Mr. Parsley, she mingled with exceeding devoutness, and a serious attention to Mr. Parsley's discourse. In her heart this lady really thought her confessed daily sins forgiven her by the recovery of the lost sheep to Mr. Parsley's fold.

The results of this small passage of arms were that Evan's disclosure at Fallowfield was annulled in the mind of Harry Jocelyn, and the latter gentleman became the happy slave of the Countess de Saldar.

END OF VOL. I.



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